

GANDHI'S SATYAGRAHA AS A METHOD OF PERSONAL CHANGE  
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AN INDIGENOUS  
APPROACH TO PASTORAL COUNSELLING IN  
INDIA

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by  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Purpose of Dissertation . . . . .	1
Review of Literature . . . . .	3
Methodology . . . . .	11
Scope and Limitations . . . . .	12
Background Information . . . . .	15
Requirements for Indigenized Pastoral Counselling in India . . . . .	27
II. GANDHI'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF MAN AND THE NATURE OF CHANGE . . . . .	35
Gandhi's Understanding of the Nature of Man . . . . .	35
The Dual Nature of Man . . . . .	35
The Unity of Mankind . . . . .	38
The Wholeness of Man . . . . .	43
The Freedom of Man . . . . .	44
The Goodness of Man . . . . .	47
Gandhi's Understanding of the Nature of Change . . . . .	50
The Nature of Change . . . . .	50
The Direction of Change . . . . .	52
The Morality of Change . . . . .	56
The Problem of Ends and Means in Change . . . . .	59
The Dynamics of Change . . . . .	61



Chapter	Page
III. A STUDY OF GANDHI'S SATYAGRAHA AS A METHOD OF PERSONAL CHANGE . . . . .	66
A Definition of Satyagraha . . . . .	66
A Further Exploration of Satyagraha in Terms of its Essential Elements . . . . .	70
Truth . . . . .	71
Non-Violence . . . . .	78
Self-Suffering . . . . .	85
IV. SATYAGRAHA AS A METHOD OF PERSONAL CHANGE IN ONE'S OPPONENT . . . . .	93
To Make an Appeal to the Opponent's Reason and Conscience . . . . .	93
To Convert the Opponent and Make Him One's Willing Ally and Friend . . . . .	100
To Bring out the Best in Both, the Satyagrahi and the Opponent . . . . .	106
To Encourage the Opponent to Join in a Common Quest for Truth . . . . .	113
V. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SATYAGRAHA FOR AN INDIGENOUS MODEL OF PASTORAL COUNSELING IN INDIA . . . . .	121
Theological Implications of Satyagraha . . . . .	121
Truth . . . . .	122
Non-Violence . . . . .	130
Self-Suffering . . . . .	139
Psychosocial Implications of Satyagraha . . . . .	149
Autonomy and Community . . . . .	149
Identity . . . . .	159
Conscience and Guilt . . . . .	169

Chapter	Page
VI. SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF GANDHI'S SATYAGRAHA FOR PASTORAL COUNSELLING IN INDIA . . . . .	179
Applications of the Principle of Truth to Pastoral Counselling . . . . .	179
Application of the Principle of Non-Violence to the Resolution of Conflict in Marriage and Family . . . . .	185
Communication . . . . .	188
Trusting One's Partner . . . . .	192
Home Work for the Couple . . . . .	193
Role Play During the Sessions . . . . .	194
Application of the Principle of Mutual Growth to Counselling Relationship . . . . .	196
Application of the Principle of Self-Purification to the Personal Growth of the Pastoral Counsellor . . . . .	203
Conclusion and Recommendations . . . . .	208
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	211

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of Dissertation

My main purpose in this dissertation is to make some significant contribution to the growing discipline of the pastoral counselling in India. Pastoral counselling is a genuine encounter between a minister and a parishioner (any person) or a small group in which people are helped to manage their personal and social problems by asserting their human existence and by becoming aware of, and actualizing their inner resources in the direction of personal and social growth. I recognize that in the past, many Christian ministers in India have practiced some form of "pastoral counselling" within the context of the healing ministry of the Church. However, it is only recently, within the last ten years that the discipline of the pastoral counselling has been incorporated in the curriculums of the theological colleges and seminaries of India. Even now, it has not acquired a full status of its own, therefore, it is not a required course for the training of the ministers.

The discipline of the pastoral counselling in India has depended greatly on the theory and practice of the pastoral counselling as developed in the West. Most of the books used in the theological colleges, with the exception of a few, have been written by the Western authors. The Indian authors who have written introductory

books have generally summarized the insights derived from the Western scholars. They have attempted to relate these insights to the Indian situations. However, there has not been any attempt to use indigenous resources for the development of pastoral counselling in India. Therefore, it is the purpose of this dissertation to find ways and means to indigenize pastoral counselling in India.

The author has chosen to study Gandhi's *satyagraha* as a method of personal change for the following reasons:

- (1) Since, Gandhi's method of *satyagraha* was used quite successfully in producing significant changes in his opponents both, the British and the Indian, without the use of violence, the author would like to explore critically the possibilities of discovering some principles and concepts which could be used effectively in producing personal change in human beings without violating the personal integrity of the people. The author would like to explore further the possibilities of these principles for the practice of pastoral counselling in India.
- (2) I recognize that Gandhi's *satyagraha* is an indigenous concept and the principles on which it is based are complementary to the Christian faith. Therefore, it is the purpose of this dissertation to explore Gandhi's method of *Satyagraha* and to discover if these principles and concepts could be integrated into the theory and practice of pastoral counselling in India. The author would also like to find out if Gandhi's *satyagraha* helps the process of humanization. The author is very much interested in the development of the individual identity but not at the cost of the destruction of the community. Therefore, I

will explore if the principles of *satyagraha* create a balance between the healthy individualism and the caring community. The purpose of indigenization of the pastoral counselling in India is not only to use indigenous resources but also to maintain certain human elements of the community and to destroy those elements which produce dehumanization of persons.

### Review of Literature

In the following pages the author will present in a summary form the essential contributions of some of the important studies on Gandhi's *satyagraha*. Although there is ample literature available on the subject of *satyagraha*, showing how it changes individual members of social groups in order to bring social and political changes, there is very little on implications of *satyagraha* for direct approaches to individual growth, apart from group or social change. Also, there is no literature which deals with *satyagraha* in terms of its implications for the discipline of pastoral counselling.

Eric H. Erikson's work on Gandhi has some practical implications for the subject of personal change and counselling. He brings to bear upon the study his knowledge of psychoanalysis. In *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origin of Militant Nonviolence*,<sup>1</sup> Erikson understands Gandhi's desire for realization of his own *dharma* as equivalent to a discovery of self-identity. Erikson compares Gandhi's method of

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<sup>1</sup>Eric H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: Norton, 1969).

*satyagraha* with Freud's method of psychoanalysis. He thinks that the "truth" of *satyagraha* and the "reality" of psychoanalysis have the same connotation.

Finally, the truth of Satyagraha and the 'reality' of psychoanalysis come somewhat nearer to each other if it is assumed that man's 'reality testing' includes an attempt not only to think clearly but also to enter into an optimum of mutual activation with others.<sup>2</sup>

Thus for Erikson *satyagraha* is a means of entering into a mutual relationship in which both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent are transformed and purified of their fear, hatred and mutual mistrust. The change and transformation take place on both sides as a result of mutual activation.

Joan V. Bondurant's book, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, is a very careful and excellent study of the central ideas in Gandhi's political thought. She has very ably analysed the method of *satyagraha* and contrasted it efficiently with universal political theories of conservatism, liberalism and anarchism. Thus the author deals with the characteristics of *satyagraha* and their implications for social and political philosophy.

The author feels that *satyagraha* provides a technique for effecting *social* and *political* change through the constructive conduct of conflict. Bondurant writes, "The most important legacy Gandhi left to India was the technique of *satyagraha*. There was in this instrument of action, power to effect change."<sup>3</sup> She emphasizes the need to pay

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<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 439.

<sup>3</sup>J. V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence* (Princeton: Princeton

attention to the problem of means in achieving social and political goal. She feels that if goals are achieved without regard to means, they are bound to produce harmful consequences. She feels that violence is a part of human situation and the best way to deal with this problem is not by escape but to face and conquer it through Gandhian methods.

Another important study related to Gandhi's *satyagraha* is Richard B. Gregg's book,<sup>4</sup> *The Power of Non-Violence*. In his book he has analysed the theory of non-violent resistance with regard to its relationship with political institutions and as effective substitute for war. He feels that commitment to truth and frankness are important in resolving conflicts.

Gregg utilizes the knowledge of psychological and scientific theories to argue for the effectiveness of non-violent resistance. Gregg feels that non-violent technique is the best technique to disarm one's opponent. He discusses the technique of non-violence for the individual, for the masses and for the state. He comes to the conclusion that Gandhi's method of non-violent resistance can be an effective substitute for war. He contends that persuasion through love can actualize the potentialities of goodness in man.

C. M. Case, a professional sociologist, in his book,<sup>5</sup>

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University Press, 1958), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>R. B. Gregg, *The Power of Non-Violence* (New York: Schocken, 1966).

<sup>5</sup>C. M. Case, *Non-Violent Coercion* (New York: Century, 1923).

*Non-Violent Coercion*, has tried to analyse the problems and significance of non-violent conduct in human life. He tried to show that human beings do not always cooperate with their oppressors in meek submission but resist either by attacking or resorting to methods which could change the behavior of the oppressors.

The author describes the various ways whereby one can resist or attempt to change the conduct of others, giving special consideration to persuasion and non-violent coercion. The author thinks that non-violent methods are the best to bring orderly change in society. He feels that the non-violent methods have the capacity to dramatize injustice and to arouse people from their sluggishness and apathy.

Gene Sharp in his book, *Exploring Non-Violent Alternatives*,<sup>6</sup> considers *satyagraha* as a technique and a strategy which can be used effectively by civilians against the invaders to disarm them.<sup>7</sup> Sharp contends that if the people refuse to cooperate with the invader and resist him, they will take away his power of conquering them. Sharp is preparing an encyclopedia on the subject of non-violent action, to be used in training people in non-violent methods. The only danger with Sharp's emphasis on "technique" is that it is likely to become an impersonal method. Gandhi was opposed to such an approach. Raja Gopalacharya, the first Governor General of India, writes:

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<sup>6</sup>G. Sharp, *Exploring Non-Violent Alternatives* (Boston: Sargent, 1970), pp. 47-72.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*



Leaders of men abroad have admired Gandhiji, as one who developed an effective new 'technique' based on non-violence for struggle against wrong. The very notion that what Gandhiji taught was a 'technique' has led to error and of course disappointment. Non-violence is not a gadget to get what we used to try to get through violence. . . . Mahatma Gandhi's 'technique' is no doubt the presentation of Love and Truth in any confrontation against evil. But love and truth are not available in the market. We can not procure them as we can procure rifles and pistols. They can issue only out of faith in God.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly there can be no separation of the person from the method. When a method is alienated from the person, it becomes a technique. Gandhi would not accept any such separation. Any method which transforms a man into a "thing" becomes a "technique."

There has been a body of Christian literature on the subject of non-violence. Thomas Merton's *Faith and Violence*,<sup>9</sup> is a collection of essays dealing with more general subjects like resistance, the Vietnam War, the race problem and the death of God.

In *Non-Violence and the Christian Conscience*,<sup>10</sup> Pie Regamey wants to correct the negative and inadequate image of non-violence in America. The writer feels that "non-violent resistance is the Christian way *par excellence* to resist evil."<sup>11</sup> The writer tries to

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<sup>8</sup>R. Gopalachariya, *Mahatma Gandhi: 100 Years*, S. Radhakrishnan, ed. (New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1968), p. 378, cited by T. K. Thomas, "Failure of Gandhi," *Religion and Society*, XVI:3 (September 1969), 61.

<sup>9</sup>T. Merton, *Faith and Violence* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1968).

<sup>10</sup>P. Regamey, *Non-Violence and the Christian Conscience* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

show that the story of incarnation is the story of entry of the non-violent God into the life of man. He tries to demonstrate that non-violence is the only authentic relationship between human persons.

A somewhat similar book is *The Non-Violent Cross: A Theology of Revolution and Peace*, by James W. Douglas.<sup>12</sup> The author perceives in Gandhi's *satyagraha* a glimpse of the eternal message of the Cross of Jesus Christ. The writer demonstrates that Truth has the power to bring personal change. He writes:

It should be noted carefully that a theology of such openness to Truth's power in man does not assert that Satyagraha will always be effective in practice. In fact it will not be. But a theology of redemptive truth does assert that Satyagraha *can* always be effective. Its failures must be attributed neither to the divine power of Truth, which is infinite, nor to human nature itself, which is open, but failure must be attributed rather to the practitioners of non-violence, whose meditation of Truth is insufficient in terms of its full power in God and in terms of the immediate need of unredeemed man to be struck by it.<sup>13</sup>

James Douglas agrees with Gandhi's philosophy of *satyagraha* by writing:

The Truth is man's end. But the Truth is also the way, and the way is Love. That the God of Truth and the God of Suffering Love are one is the meaning of the Cross, and the way of man's transfiguration into God.<sup>14</sup>

Another book which combines sociological and ethical analysis is, *Conquest by Suffering: The Process and Prospects of Nonviolent*

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<sup>12</sup>J. W. Douglas, *The Non-Violent Cross* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 292.

*Resistance*, by Seifert.<sup>15</sup> He considers *satyagraha* as a method which can bring dynamic change in the social situations where resistance cannot be broken effectively by any other method. He is convinced that the method is sound from a theological and ethical perspective. He is very much attracted to *satyagraha* because of its uniqueness in incorporating the idea of self-suffering. He feels that, "In this sense it is a method of the Cross rather than of the sword."<sup>16</sup>

Seifert feels that the method of non-violent resistance transforms the usual polarization, which occurs in any intense conflict, into greater mutuality. The vicious circle is reversed and instead of destructive consequences, constructive and growth-oriented consequences begin to emerge. People become more open to each other and interact with each other without any threat of losing their identity.

While recognizing the efficacy and practicability of the non-violent method, Seifert suggests that non-violent methods can become coercive in nature. However, he recognizes the necessity of non-violent coercion when persuasion does not work, but warns that it should be kept at a minimum and, "the forms of coercion used embody as much love and as little destruction as possible."<sup>17</sup> He recognizes that any coercion is a compromise and one must be aware of that fact. Seifert has analysed Gandhi's method quite objectively and

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<sup>15</sup>H. Seifert, *Conquest by Suffering* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965).

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 105.

sympathetically. He has been able to maintain a creative balance between Christian faith and Gandhi's non-violent method.

In conclusion, I can observe that the above mentioned literature on Gandhi provides valuable insights from the perspectives of sociology, psychology, theology and ethics. However, with the exception of Erikson, all other authors deal with the individual change in the context of the social and political change only. The author would like to make a contribution to the world of literature on Gandhi's *satyagraha* by studying its implications on individual change and pastoral counselling.

As far as literature in the field of pastoral counselling in India is concerned, there is very little available which deals directly with the explicit purpose of indigenizing of pastoral counselling. The literature in the field of pastoral care and counselling in India deals more or less with the application of the Western models of pastoral counselling to the Indian parish situation. The only sign of indigenization is to be found in the attempt to write books in the regional languages. The author is aware of only one significant book written by V. T. Kurien, *An Introduction to Pastoral Counselling*.<sup>18</sup> This book provides simple guidelines for the ministers to practice pastoral counselling in the context of the Indian parish. One significant feature of his book is that he has not prescribed any definite method of pastoral counselling but has described the various

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<sup>18</sup>V. T. Kurien, *An Introduction to Pastoral Counselling* (Madras: Christian Student's Library, 1970).

methods in simple words. His book has been already translated in more than one Indian language.

### Methodology

In this dissertation, the author will make use of the documents containing the speeches and written material of Mahatma Gandhi. Fortunately, the Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, has published *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* in two languages; English and Hindi. The *Works* contains every word addressed in public and written by Gandhi, with the exclusion of some written documents not released by the Government of South Africa. Therefore, the author has access to all the needed information with regard to his study on the method of *satyagraha*.

Apart from these documents, there are other secondary documents, written by Gandhi's friends, followers and critics. There is ample literature available, written by social and political scientists as well as by Christian theologians, both Catholic and Protestants. There are many articles written on the subject of *satyagraha* which have been published in various magazines in India and abroad. Material on Gandhi is also available from various symposiums held in India and in other countries.

As far as the material in the field of pastoral counselling and the related fields is considered, there is very little written by the Indian authors. Therefore, I shall use most of the material written by the Western scholars. However, the author will make an

attempt to use any material available from the Indian sources.

### Scope and Limitations

In this dissertation, the author intends to make a depth study of Gandhi's method of *satyagraha*, as a method of personal change and seek its implications for the development of indigenized pastoral counselling in India.

Although Gandhi used the method of *satyagraha* mostly in the field of politics, he also used it in his interpersonal relationships. Harve Chaigne writes, "From the very first we can observe satyagraha in action in the mahatma's own life, in his relations with his father, his teacher, his caste."<sup>19</sup> Gandhi himself declared:

It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used by men, women and children.<sup>20</sup>

Gandhi recognized that unless people confronted each other openly they cannot arrive at a constructive solution to any conflict. Donald E. Smith writes, "Stripped of all rhetoric, satyagraha was a technique for creating a confrontation with an adversary (individual or institution) whose acts or relationships with others were regarded as unjust . . ."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>H. Chaigne, "The Spirit and Techniques of Gandhian Non-Violence," *Cross Currents*, XI:2 (Spring 1961), 128.

<sup>20</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance* (New York: Schocken, 1972), p. 34.

<sup>21</sup>D. E. Smith, "Religious Revolutionaries of the Third World:

In this dissertation the author will limit the scope of the study to the method of *satyagraha* only as it relates to personal change. The author is well aware that in doing so, situations from political and social fields may be used but the emphasis will be only on the personal change. Gandhi himself laid emphasis on the primacy of personal change over and against social and political change. Therefore, it will be the task of this author to study *satyagraha* in the context of the interpersonal relationships.

The first chapter is the introduction to my dissertation. It deals with the purpose of my dissertation, review of the literature, and its scope and limitations. It also deals with the background of Gandhi's *satyagraha* and the requirements for the indigenized pastoral counselling in India.

In the second chapter, I will deal with Gandhi's understanding of the nature of man and the nature of change. We shall observe that Gandhi continued to believe in the basic goodness of man and was convinced in the power of love and suffering in bringing change in man. He remained firm till the end in his fundamental conviction, that any attempt to coerce a man to change is a violation of human dignity. A genuine change must arise as a result of the inner voice rather than any external voice.

In the third chapter, I will try to state clearly a definition of *satyagraha* and later to elaborate it in terms of three important

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Gandhi, Gandhians, and Guerrilleros," in P. F. Power (ed.) *The Meanings of Gandhi* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1971), p. 142.

elements: truth, non-violence and self-suffering. I will try to show that these three elements are not only essential but give a holistic shape to *satyagraha*.

In the fourth chapter, I will deal with *satyagraha* as a method of personal change as it relates to one's opponent. I will try to show that *satyagraha* has a definite direction and goal. The process of change does not flow from one end to another but in both directions. The *satyagrahi*<sup>22</sup> and the opponent become involved in the process of change and mutual growth.

The fifth chapter deals with the theoretical implications of *satyagraha* for an indigenous model of pastoral counselling in India. The author would like to develop some working principles for the indigenized pastoral counselling, by studying the theological and psychosocial implications of *satyagraha*.

The sixth chapter deals with the practical applications of *satyagraha* to the process of pastoral counselling, the relationship between the counsellor and the counsellee, the resolution of conflict in marriage and family and finally to the personal growth of the pastoral counsellor.

The author recognizes that he has not made an exhaustive use of the literature, on human personality, written by Indian psychologists and sociologists. The reason for this was the limited resources available in the libraries to which I had access.

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<sup>22</sup>*Satyagrahi* is a person who practices *satyagraha*.



### Background Information

*Biographical Statement.* Mahatma Gandhi's full name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was born at Porbandar, on the 2nd October, 1869. Porbandar was "a tiny state in the Kathiawar peninsula, western India, about half-way between the mouth of the Indus and the city of Bombay."<sup>23</sup> His father Karamchand Gandhi, was prime minister to Rana Sheb Vikmatji, the ruler of Porbandar, but quit his job to take another prime ministership in Rajkot. Gandhi's father was also a man of truth and self-respect. Gandhi wrote, "but he was incorruptible and had earned a reputation for strict impartiality in his family as well as generous, but short-tempered. To a certain extent he might have been given to carnal pleasure. For he married for the fourth time when he was forty."<sup>24</sup> Gandhi's mother Putlibai was a religious person. Gandhi writes, "the outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. She was deeply religious. She would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers." And then he goes on to describe that his mother "had strong common sense. She was well informed about all matters of state, and ladies of the court thought highly of her intelligence. Often I would accompany her, exercising the privilege of childhood. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>L. Fisher, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 20.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 4-5.

Gandhi belonged to the *Vaishya* caste and his own clan belonged to the *Modh Bania*. This means that originally Gandhi's family belonged to grocers but for "three generations from my grandfather, they have been Prime Ministers in several Kathiawar states."<sup>26</sup> Gandhi, therefore came from a cultured family. Louis Fisher writes, "Gandhi's home life was cultured and the family, by Indian standards, was well-to-do. There were books in the house; they dealt chiefly with religion and mythology. . . ."<sup>27</sup>

As a child, Gandhi received affection and love from his family and even special treatment because he was the youngest child in the home.<sup>28</sup>

Gandhi spent most of his childhood in Porbandar, amusing himself with rubber balloons and revolving tops. He played tennis and cricket and also "gilli danda."<sup>29</sup> Gandhi mentioned that he was not good with studies. The reason was that he disliked being taken to task by his teachers.<sup>30</sup>

Gandhi mentions an incidence which has significance for the origin of *satyagraha* during his childhood. Gandhi writes:

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<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup>Fisher, p. 21.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>29</sup>*Gilli danda* is a game which consists of striking a short, sharpened wooden peg with a long stick. It is one of the most popular games for boys.

<sup>30</sup>Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 7.

There is an incident which occurred at the examination during my first year at the high school and which is worth recording. Mr. Giles, the Educational Inspector, had come on a visit of inspection. He had set us five words to write as a spelling exercise. One of the words was 'kettle.' I had mis-spelt it. The teacher tried to prompt me with the point of his boot, but I would not be prompted. It was beyond me to see that he wanted me to copy the spelling from my neighbours slate, for I had thought that the teacher was there to supervise us against copying. The result was that all the boys, except myself, were found to have spelt every word correctly. Only I had been stupid. The teacher tried later to bring this stupidity home to me but without effect. I never could learn the art of 'copying.'<sup>31</sup>

In this early stage, Gandhi had a sense of being honest and to resist any one trying to deviate him from his path.

During his childhood, Gandhi came across two books which dealt with the theme of truth and firmness. One of them was *Shravana Pitribhakti Nataka* (a play about Shravana's devotion to his parents). The book deals with the theme of sacrifice on the part of Shravana, ultimately, giving his life. Gandhi writes:

One of the pictures I was shown was of Shravana carrying, by means of slings fitted for his shoulders, his blind parents on a pilgrimage. The book and the picture left an indelible impression on my mind. 'Here is an example for you to copy' I said to myself. The agonized lament of the parents over Shravana's death is still fresh in my memory. The melting tune moved me deeply, and I played it on a concertina which my father had purchased for me.<sup>32</sup>

Here was the theme of suffering voluntarily taken out of love for one's blind parents. Here is the theme of giving one's life for the sake of others.

The second book was also in the form of a play--*Harishchandra*. Here was a book dealing with a man who was truthful and would not give

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<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

up his truth, no matter what crisis and temptation came upon him.

Gandhi writes:

This play--*Harishchandra*--captured my heart. I could never be tired of seeing it. But how often should I be permitted to go? It haunted me and I must have acted *Harishchandra* to myself times without number. 'Why should not all be truthful like Harishchandra?' was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Harishchandra went through was the one ideal it inspired in me. I literally believed in the story of Harishchandra. The thought of it often made me weep. My common sense tells me today that Harishchandra could not have been a historical character. Still both Harishchandra and Shrivatsa are living realities for me, and I am sure I should be moved as before if I were to read those plays again today.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from the impact, these two plays made on Gandhi, it is of interest to note that these books were "plays" and not just prose books. A play communicates its message in a dramatic fashion. In other words these two plays represented truth in action. As we shall discover later, that Gandhi was interested all his life not in an abstract truth but truth in action. And his method of *satyagraha* combined this aspect. A play contains an element of ritual through which the message goes directly to the heart. Erikson understands the usefulness of ritualization and thus writes:

Thus the decay or perversion of ritual does not create an indifferent emptiness, but a void with explosive possibilities. . . . For it explains why 'nice' people who have lost the gift of imparting values by meaningful ritualization can have children who become (or behave like) juvenile delinquents: and why nice 'church going' nations can so act as to arouse the impression of harbouring pervasive murderous intent.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup>E. H. Erikson, "The Development of Ritualization," in *Religious Situation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 724.

Erikson considers Gandhi's *satyagraha* as a creative ritualization.<sup>35</sup>

Gandhi was married at the age of thirteen to Kasturbai who was also of the same age. It was an arranged marriage which Gandhi criticized later on. "Little did I dream then that one day I should severely criticize my father for having married me as a child."<sup>36</sup> Gandhi wanted to teach his wife because she was illiterate but Kasturbai did not want to learn. He tried to teach her against her will. Therefore Gandhi confesses, "I must therefore confess that most of my efforts to instruct Kasturbai in our youth were unsuccessful."<sup>37</sup>

Gandhi recognizes that he was lacking in pure love and therefore could not change Kasturbai. He writes, "I am sure that, had my love for her been absolutely untainted with lust, she would be a learned lady today; for I could then have conquered her dislike for studies. I know that nothing is impossible for pure love."<sup>38</sup>

During his high school years, Gandhi came in contact with a friend whom he tried to reform but his attempt was a failure. On failure to reform, Gandhi wrote:

I have seen since that I had calculated wrongly. A reformer can not afford to have close intimacy with him whom he seeks to reform. . . . Hence in friendship there is very little scope for reform.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 732.

<sup>36</sup>Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

In fact because of this friend Gandhi had a misunderstanding with his wife. He was suspicious of his wife with regard to this friend. However, Gandhi recognized that his wife was a human being and not his slave. He writes:

The canker of suspicion was rooted out only when I understood *Ahimsa* (non-violence) in all its bearings. I saw then the glory of *Brahmacharya* and realized that the wife is not husband's bond-slave, but his companion and his helpmate, and an equal partner in all his joys and sorrows--as free as the husband to choose her own path. . . .<sup>40</sup>

Here we get a glimpse in Gandhi's respect for human beings and especially about women. To treat one's wife as equal, and free to choose her own path, was indeed revolutionary, at least in that period.

Another incidence had significance for the development of his method of *satyagraha*. Gandhi had stolen some gold from his brother's armlet. But Gandhi was troubled in his conscience and decided to confess his deeds to his father, through a written note. Gandhi writes:

I decided at last to write out the confession, to submit to my father, and ask his forgiveness. I wrote it on a slip of paper and handed it to him myself. In this note not only did I confess my guilt, but I asked adequate punishment for it, and closed with a request to him not to punish himself for my offence. I also pledged myself never to steal in the future.<sup>41</sup>

But instead of punishment, there were tears of love in his father's eyes, which spoke of forgiveness in a dramatic act. Gandhi writes, "Those pearl-drops of love cleansed my heart, and washed my sin away."<sup>42</sup> Here Gandhi learned the power of self-suffering and its lasting impact in the transformation of man. For Gandhi this was

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<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

"an object-lesson in Ahimsa."

After his matriculation, he went to England to study law. This period is filled with a desire to bring reform to his own life. First he tried to change the external in the hope of becoming like an English man. But later, he recognized the futility of external change. Gandhi writes in his autobiography, "I had not to spend a life time in England, I said to myself. What then was the use of learning elocution? And how could dancing make a gentleman of me? . . . If my character made a gentleman of me, so much the better. Otherwise I should forego the ambition."<sup>43</sup>

*Actual encounter with his opponents and the beginning of his method of satyagraha.* When Gandhi came to South Africa in 1893, with the purpose of winning a lawsuit for an Indian businessman, he observed the degrading conditions of the Indian people. Even though India was a colony of Britain, the conditions in South Africa baffled him. English men called all Indians "coolies,"<sup>44</sup> "coolie merchants," "coolie barristers," etc. One day, Gandhi went to court. But when the magistrate ordered him to remove his turban, he refused and left the court. This was his first experience of humiliation and his first response of resistance. He did not cooperate with the magistrate in the perpetuation of an unjust practice.

If Gandhi had taken his turban off at the order of the

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<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>44</sup>*Coolie* means a blue collar worker.

magistrate, he would have been as guilty as the magistrate in perpetuating the evil practice of injustice based on racial discrimination. But Gandhi tried to put a brake by his act of resistance. Later on Gandhi could say that everyone is the guardian of his own self-respect.<sup>45</sup>

Once again, when he was travelling in a first-class railway compartment, he was asked to vacate the compartment so that an English man could travel. Gandhi refused to obey the order. Finally, he was thrown out forcibly. Gandhi began to think in terms of dealing with this problem. Gandhi writes:

I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial--only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice.<sup>46</sup>

Gandhi refused to escape the responsibility which this incident threw in his lap. He decided to resist the evil practice of discrimination.

Even though the term *satyagraha* was not yet born, it had already taken birth in the heart of Gandhi. There is another incident, when he was being pushed out from a coach, he clung to the brass rail,

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<sup>45</sup>N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajiran Publishing House, 1948), p. 43.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 112.



almost "holding on with firmness." He continued to suffer the humiliation, without retaliation, till the white passengers intervened: "Don't beat him," they shouted. "He is not to blame. He is right." And Gandhi was allowed to enter the coach.<sup>47</sup> Gandhi through his suffering was able to evoke the hidden goodness present in all people. *Satyagraha* had already begun. He did not need an army. He was his own army and his own general. From now on, his method of resistance will evolve into a powerful method and will be called *satyagraha*.

Non-violent resistance had begun but the movement was still called "passive-resistance." Gandhi wanted to give a concrete shape to his method. On December 28, 1907, he initiated a contest in the Indian journal, *Indian Opinion*, to find a suitable name to describe the movement of the Indian people against the government. The prize was won by Maganlal, who proposed the word "Sadagraha," meaning "firmness in a good cause." However, Gandhi was not completely satisfied and therefore changed it to *Satyagraha*.

In the early phase, *satyagraha* is simply "determined opposition to anything unjust" and "firmness in a good cause." At this stage simple disobedience of the unjust laws was considered *satyagraha*. Gandhi writes:

It can be effective only in situations where we are required to act positively. For instance, if the Government does not allow us to acquire land, satyagraha will be of no avail. If, however, it forbids us from walking along a certain foot-path, or asks

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<sup>47</sup>Fisher, pp. 49-50.

us to shift to locations, or seeks to prevent us from carrying on trade, we can resort to satyagraha. That is, if we are required to do anything which violates our religion or insults our manhood, we can administer the invaluable physic of satyagraha.<sup>48</sup>

In 1908, on February 22, Gandhi makes an attempt to enlarge the concept of *Satyagraha*. He recognizes that his method will not work unless people, who administer it, are also changed. He knew that as long as people are slaves to fear, they cannot resist fully. He says:

But our satyagraha prompts us to become free and feel independent. . . . A satyagrahi enjoys a degree of freedom not possible for others, for he becomes a truly fearless person. Once his mind is rid of fear, he will never agree to be another's slave.<sup>49</sup>

At this stage, Gandhi considers that *satyagraha* is, "really an attitude of mind" and means "resistance of evil with inner force instead of physical force."<sup>50</sup> During this period Gandhi mentions four *satyagrahis* in history (Thoreau, Galileo, Columbus and Luther) who resisted against external wicked forces. Now Gandhi adds another element--the element of courage which is combined with love and fearlessness. Gandhi says:

A satyagrahi will adhere to truth to the last. If we want to be satyagrahis, we must have the courage to range ourselves against the Government or our own community, if necessary, and courage consists in being fearless.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1962), VIII, 61.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, VIII, 91.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, VIII, 131.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, VIII, 259.

Then on April 18, 1908, another contest was held and a prize was awarded by *Indian Opinion* to M. S. Maurice for an essay on the ethics of *satyagraha*. The essay contained extensive quotes from Henry Thoreau. However, a new element--the element of religion entered in his concept of *Satyagraha*. On June 27, 1908, Gandhi says, "The sword of satyagraha is far superior to the steel sword. Truth and justice provide its point; divine help is the hilt that adorns it."<sup>52</sup>

The spirit which Gandhi manifests at this time is the spirit of a religious crusader. On September 9, 1908, Gandhi says again:

This campaign is based on spiritual force. Hence it has a divine sanction. We know that intellectual force is superior to physical force, and spiritual force is superior to intellectual force. That is the highest force.<sup>53</sup>

From now on, this element of spirituality, in the form of trust in God, continues to influence Gandhi's method of *satyagraha*. Gandhi was so much convinced of the purity of his method, because of his trust in God, that he began to claim that a successful *satyagraha* always leads to a change of heart in one's opponent. Therefore Gandhi declared:

The sword of satyagraha is not to be used for cutting dung cakes which is what the domiciliary rights of a handful of Transvaal Indians really are, but to pierce the violent, rock-like hatred in the hearts of the whites.<sup>54</sup>

Gradually Gandhi began to believe that love and self-suffering, as integral part of *satyagraha*, will bring genuine change

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<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, VIII, 324.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, IX, 14-15.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, VIII, 366-367.

in one's opponent. Gandhi was confident that the hearts of men can be touched with the power of love, expressed through self-suffering.

A. L. Herman writes:

Gandhi believed this and all his life held firmly to the doctrine that man is basically, inwardly good. In this he was like Tolstoi, and like Tolstoi and Jesus of Nazareth, he believed that doing good to your enemies, and loving them that persecute you, were the ways to miraculously and divinely pierce that hard crust and convert even the most intemperate of the obdurately wicked.<sup>55</sup>

Gandhi was so confident of his method in converting the opponent that he suggested his method to everyone, including the Jews under Hitler. Gandhi's confidence is reflected in his statement, "For it should be an article of faith with every Satyagrahi that there is none so fallen in this world but cannot be converted by love."<sup>56</sup>

After his return to India in 1915, Gandhi entered into Indian politics and by 1920, he was the undisputed leader of the Indian freedom movement. He was able to capture the imagination of all people and attract a great number of people to his non-violent method to resist against the British government. Louis Fisher writes:

Everything in Gandhi's personality and record helped the people identify themselves with him and venerate him. Even skeptics were captivated by his courage, indestructible vitality, good humor, near toothlessness, self-confidence and unlimited faith in people.<sup>57</sup>

Gandhi used his method of satyagraha effectively against the

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<sup>55</sup>A. L. Herman, "Satyagraha: A New Indian word for some old ways of Western thinking," *Philosophy East and West*, XIX:2 (April 1969), 131.

<sup>56</sup>Gandhi, *Non-violent Resistance*, p. 77.

<sup>57</sup>Fisher, p. 196.

British and his own people. One of his immediate objectives, the freedom of India, became a reality on August 15, 1947. But his work was not over yet. He was interested in the liberation of man from all kinds of bondage. And to that end, he continued to make his contribution till the end of his life.

### Requirements for Indigenized Pastoral Counselling in India

In this section the author would like to discuss the problem of indigenization of pastoral counselling in the context of the overall indigenization of the Christian ministry in India.

The word "indigenization" has been used so extensively in the "third world" that, at times, it has lost its real meaning. Shoki Coe writes:

Indigenous, indigeneity, and indigenization all derive from a native metaphor, that is, of the soil, or taking root in the soil. It is only right that the younger churches, in search of their own identity, should take seriously their own cultural milieu. However, because of the static nature of the metaphor, indigenization tends to be used in the sense of responding to the Gospel in terms of traditional culture. Therefore, it is in danger of being past oriented. . . .<sup>58</sup>

The danger which Shoki Coe mentions does not lie in the concept itself but in the attitude of the people. Therefore, any attempt at indigenization must take into consideration, seriously, the nature and character of the people.

A genuine process of indigenization must be open to truth and

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<sup>58</sup>S. Coe, "In search of renewal in Theological education," *Theological Education*, IX:4 (Summer 1973), 240.

therefore open to the past, the present and the future. If indigenization is carried out in order to adopt any idea from outside of one's traditional heritage, without regard to its impact on the present and its consequences in the future, then such a process is bound to create barriers in healthy growth.

Indigenization does not mean that one depends constantly upon other cultures for a supply of ideas, to be integrated in one's own culture. Such a process will not be a growth facilitating process. It will keep people dependent on others. Therefore, indigenization must look to the future, with the goal of developing one's own ideas. The process must begin now with all humility but with courage. Paul Verghese, an Indian theologian and an educator challenges:

We Christians in India need to forge some new trails on our own. The question is: do we have the courage to let go of the crutch of Western theology in order to delve deep into our tradition and rediscover the profound wealth of the universal gospel in the light of our own cultural predicament?<sup>59</sup>

Any initiative in the direction of the new is always filled with anxiety and therefore requires courage. But courage is a quality of character and of those, who have a sense of identity. Therefore, indigenization must not be a return to irrelevancy but to a sound and healthy respect for one's own heritage. It should never be out of mere passion for one's culture but with a critical openness to one's past and a sense of responsibility for the present and with dreams and vision for the future.

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<sup>59</sup>P. Verghese, "The Crisis in Theological Education--the Need for New Perspectives," *Indian Journal of Theology*, XX:4 (October-December 1971), 197.

A genuine indigenization creates a sense of identity which is essential for one's self-respect. Anyone who does not have a positive sense of identity will not let go his "dependency" and therefore is unable to assimilate and modify ideas from outside, creatively. A genuine and authentic appreciation for one's own cultural, national and racial background, creates possibilities for genuine interaction and mutual learning with other cultures. But these possibilities always arise in the context of the present. The past and the future meet in the present and therefore any new development in the field of pastoral theology must be directed to the actual needs of the people. Chandran quotes a statement issued at the East Asia Christian Conference:

A living theology must speak to the actual question men in Asia are asking in the midst of their dilemmas; their hopes, aspirations and achievements; their doubts, despair and suffering. It must also speak in relation to the answers that are being given by Asian religions and philosophies, both in their classical form and in new forms created by the impact on them of Western thought, secularism and science. Christian theology will fulfill its task in Asia only as the Asian churches, as servants of God's word and revelation in Jesus Christ speak to the Asian situation and from involvement in it.<sup>60</sup>

If we apply the concept of "mutuality" as developed by Gandhi, indigenization becomes an experiment in truth and love. Ideas which speak of the truth and are relevant to the process of humanization, must be integrated within one's own heritage. However, any new truth must be translated into a language which can be understood by the

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<sup>60</sup> Statement of East Asia Christian Conference, cited by J. R. Chandran in *The Secular Witness of E. V. Mathews* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1972), p. iii.

people. Pastoral care and pastoral counselling, as developed in the West, uses terminology which has its origin in the Western soil. But when these same terms are brought over to a different cultural milieu, there is bound to be a problem in the process of communication. Therefore, we must make use of the indigenous terminology to convey the message.

Swami Abhishiktananda, a French Roman Catholic monk, writes:

The Gospel is one, coming from the mouth of the one Christ. Yet it has to be announced to each man in his own language. . . . By language we do not however mean the mere sounding of spoken words. Language here includes also the psychological substratum which man receives from his tradition and develops while growing in life, since language is the most powerful means of this development. If we want to be understood by any man--and in any matter whatsoever as well--we must always start with what is already known and familiar to that man.<sup>61</sup>

An indigenous approach to pastoral care and pastoral counselling in India should lead us to explore into our own cultural heritage to discover whatever may be available and whatever may be relevant. Sometimes, when people begin to explore their own cultural heritage, they very often discover potent ideas. Gandhi who was greatly influenced by Christianity and Western thought, was able to discover not only similar ideas but most powerful ideas in his own culture and religion.

The Christian church in India has a difficult task when it comes to the process of indigenization. We have depended too long on the West for ideas to practice our religion. We have isolated from our own heritage and adopted a heritage of the West. We are not only

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<sup>61</sup>Swami Abhishiktananda, "The Church in India--A Self-Examination," *Religion and Society*, XV:3 (September 1968), 8.



isolated but somewhat alienated from the rest of the culture. Perhaps, indigenization, when carried out with an objective and critical awareness, will bring healing and overcome this alienation.

M. M. Thomas, an Indian theologian writes:

It is precisely here that Indian Christianity reveals its weakness. The Christian community stands a great deal isolated from the major communities and tradition in the country and has not yet fully opened itself to their influence or to the give-and-take of the striving for a common culture.<sup>62</sup>

Indigenization in its proper sense is impossible if we do not come out of our isolationism and a sense of "exclusive identity." We cannot adequately listen to what others are speaking. Gandhi helps us to open ourselves to truth no matter from where it comes. If we believe that God speaks only within the context of the Christian church, we have created a defensive barrier and cannot listen to the Spirit of God speaking in all situations. Walter J. Burghardt writes, "We must listen to the Spirit speaking outside the Christian structure."<sup>63</sup>

The discipline of pastoral care and pastoral counselling, in the West, has taken full advantage of the insights developed by the Behavioral Sciences. In order to do that they had to open themselves to the Spirit of God speaking outside the structure of the church. In the same way the Christian church elsewhere must open itself to

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<sup>62</sup>M. M. Thomas, "The Indian Christian Tradition--Its Significance for Cultural Freedom in India," *Religion and Society*, XII:1 (March 1965), 63-64.

<sup>63</sup>Walter J. Burghardt, "Theology: The Search for God and Man," *Theological Education*, IX:2 (Winter 1973), 84.

the voice of God coming through structures outside the church.

This can be done only as we relate to people of other faiths in the spirit of truth and love. People must meet each other because the reality is expressed and communicated through genuine relationships. A statement issued by the W. C. C., declares:

Our faith in Jesus Christ who became man for all men in all times sustains us in dialogue. The expression of this faith in the life and witness of the church leads us to develop relationships with men of different faiths and ideologies. Jesus Christ who makes us free draws us out of isolation into genuine dialogue into which we enter with faith in the promise of Jesus Christ that the Holy spirit will lead us into all truth.<sup>64</sup>

In the field of pastoral care and counselling, we cannot begin *de novo*, we need to take ideas and concepts from the West because the West has had a longer history in this area. They have done extensive research in the field and therefore we must learn from great teachers of the West. However, we must not take these ideas without a critical examination. There should be an adequate assimilation of these ideas in the context of one's faith and cultural heritage. A mechanical imitation is not good for the church in India. Gandhi was well aware of this temptation in the Indian people and therefore he always warned his followers not to imitate him. Writing a letter to Premabehn Kantak, on January 25, 1932, Gandhi writes:

It is certainly not my wish, nor it is desirable, that everyone who comes close to me should be like me in every respect. That would mean mechanical imitation. If anybody wishes to

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<sup>64</sup> A statement issued by the Central Committee of the W.C.C. on January 1971, cited in *Religion and Society*, XVIII:1 (March 1971), 5.

take from me what may seem good to him, it will help him only if he takes what he can assimilate.<sup>65</sup>

For a long time we in India have adopted the Western modes of theology and worship many other practices. Therefore, there is a great temptation to adopt pastoral care and pastoral counselling as developed in the West, without trying to indigenize them.

Because of our dependence on the West for our theology and religious practices, we have been alienated from our own fellow citizens of India. Now indigenization does not mean that we become like others. It does not mean making compromises, but it means coming closer to each other, breaking the barriers which have kept us apart. If we live in alienation with our brothers, how can we witness effectively the message of love and reconciliation? In this world, because of this kind of alienation, people live in constant hostility and prejudice against each other. Most often our violence is directed towards those whom we do not understand. In India, where there is already so much division on the basis of religion, caste and class, the Christian church should become a mediator rather than participate in the process of alienation.

Pastoral care and pastoral counselling cannot ignore this fundamental problem of relationships. If we proclaim that the main purpose of the church is the "increase among men of the love of God and neighbor,"<sup>66</sup> we cannot allow ourselves to live in this alienation.

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<sup>65</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XLIX, 38.

<sup>66</sup>H. R. Niebuhr, D. D. William and J. M. Gustafson, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper & Row,

Indigenization helps us to recover our sense of cultural identity but it does not devour our sense of Christian identity. A person must be *separate* from another even in the most intimate relationships. A person who has his own sense of identity can join with others without any threat of loss of his identity. Therefore indigenization will work in two directions. We will not submerge our identity as we interact with the West and we will not be afraid of losing our identity as we relate to people of other faiths in our own culture.

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1956), p. 31.

## CHAPTER II

### GANDHI'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF MAN AND THE NATURE OF CHANGE

#### Gandhi's Understanding of the Nature of Man

Although Gandhi did not make any attempt to present a systematic philosophical or psychological view of the nature of man and the nature of change, there are elements in his writings out of which it is possible to arrive at a very consistent view of man. As we try to outline his comprehensive understanding of the nature of man, we will also grasp his understanding of the nature of change. This basic viewpoint will give us insights into his method of *satyagraha*, which is directly based on his assumption about man and change. The following are some of the aspects of Gandhi's understanding of man:

*The Dual Nature of Man.* Gandhi believed in the traditional theory of *karma* and transmigration. According to these, two inter-related theories, man's *atman* (soul) is a permanent entity, moving from one birth to another, in the cycle of births and deaths, until liberated to find eternal rest in God. Thus on the basis of this Hindu doctrine, Gandhi believed that man is made up of body and soul. And since soul is eternal and destined to go to God, it is superior to the body. Gandhi translated a section of Gita in his own language as follows:

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and egoism--this is the eight fold composition of My *prakriti* (nature). This is the lower nature; the other is higher nature, that is, life. This world is born of these two natures, that is to say, from the coming together of body and soul.<sup>1</sup>

This assumption that the material part in man, that is, body is lower and inferior to the soul, led Gandhi to have a negative view about man's sexuality and desires. M. M. Thomas, an Indian theologian, puts it quite clearly:

Behind Gandhiji's belief in non-violence lies a very clear conception of man and his ultimate destiny of self-realization. In this concept the human body is alien to the soul which is the essential selfhood of man, and for this reason, spiritual liberation is interpreted as deliverance of the soul from the body. Within such a frame work of theological thought, there is an ultimately negative attitude to human body which is seen at best as a necessary evil to be put up with and used for the time being. It is this approach to the body and its relation to the essential soul that leads Gandhi to equate body-force with violence and soul-force with non-violence.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi's assumption of the superiority of soul leads him to develop the method of *satyagraha*, which he would call as "truth-force," or "soul-force." For Gandhi, man is constantly faced between two choices, the desires of his body or the voice of his soul. Body is always creating problems for the soul. Therefore, Gandhi seems to reject body in favor of soul. Gandhi says, "The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism, but if it is a hindrance

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<sup>1</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1972), XLIX, 127.

<sup>2</sup>M. M. Thomas, "Basic Approaches to Power--Gandhiji, Andrews and King," *Religion and Society*, XVI:3 (September 1969), 16.

to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected."<sup>3</sup>

Thus for Gandhi, man is both animal and divine. The animal side is considered brute, which produces brute force, while the divine side produces soul force. At the same time that Gandhi recognizes the superiority of the soul, he sees the body as hindering the growth of soul in man. According to Gandhi man can overcome the barriers, created by the body, through right decision and action. He writes:

Man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward, but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb. . . . The downward instinct requires no advocacy, no argument.<sup>4</sup>

When a man is influenced by the forces of his body, he becomes apathetic to the spiritual aspects. Therefore, his conscience is dulled. He is so much taken by the forces of his body, that he becomes oblivious to other persons, as spiritual beings, and regards them as only physical beings. As such, other men are only objects to be exploited for the sake of his own body. Thus for Gandhi, those who live for the sake of body, do not know the pleasures of the spiritual side. A person who lives only for the sake of his body, lives as a "brute." Such a person uses violent means in order to relate to other people and make himself fit into society. He is governed and ruled by his animal passion. Preservation and self-

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<sup>3</sup>C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas Including Selections from His Writings* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1929), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>*Harijan*, February 1, 1935, cited by G. Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1957), p. 410.

security demand his attention over against any other concern. The spiritual side is darkened and he lives in darkness and ignorance of his real self.

Gandhi does not provide any satisfactory answer to the questions as to why man is so very easily influenced by his inferior side than his superior. He does not have any concept of the original sin, as found in the Christian faith. According to Gandhi all desires which originate in the body, for its own selfish purposes, are evil. However, if the desires are for the sake of others, they become good. Gandhi says, "All selfish desires are immoral while the desire to improve ourselves for the sake of doing good to others is truly moral."<sup>5</sup> Thus evil and good depend upon man's intentions and his actions.

Gandhi's understanding of the nature of man does not fit in with the Christian understanding of the human nature. According to Christianity, man is a body-soul unity, created by God as good, but fallen. The author feels that Gandhi was wrong in emphasizing the superiority of soul over the body. Such a view of the human nature results in equating the body with the evil.

*The Unity of Mankind.* For Gandhi, when he speaks of man, he includes the whole human race. According to Gandhi all men are created equal. Gandhi says, "We are all equal. The difference of

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<sup>5</sup>K. Kripalani (ed.) *All Men are Brothers* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1960), p. 99.



race and skin, of mind and body, and of climate and nation are transitory."<sup>6</sup> However, this equality is with respect to soul and not to any other feature. We should keep in mind, that Gandhi continued to believe in the Hindu caste system,<sup>7</sup> but did not believe in the inequality and untouchability imposed by the Hindu caste system. His basis of equality is, once again, derived from soul rather than any other physical or material feature. Thus a man born in India is equal to a man born in America. A man born as a Negro is equal to a white man. A person born as a woman is equal to a man. Thus to treat all people equally, irrespective of their physical characteristics, is indeed the basis of genuine love. And this unique feature will enter into his method of *satyagraha*, and become an essential core of his philosophy, making it possible for him to love every one without any distinction, including his oppressors. Gandhi writes:

Nor do I believe in inequalities of human being. We are all absolutely equal. But equality is of souls and not of bodies. Hence it is a mental state. We need to think of, and assert, equality because we see great inequalities in the physical world. We have to realize equality in the midst of this apparent external inequality. Assumption of superiority by any person over other is a sin against God and man.<sup>8</sup>

When one reads a statement like the above, one cannot but focus on Gandhi's great attempt to bring dignity to all men. Gandhi

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<sup>6</sup> *Harijan*, March 13, 1937, cited in J. Bandyopadhyaya, *Social and Political Thought of Gandhi* (Calcutta: Allied Publishers, 1969), p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> *Young India*, November 24, 1927, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> J. P. Chandrer, *Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Lahor: Indian Printing Works, 1945), p. 72.

wants to save man from all kinds of attempts which lead to his depersonalization and dehumanization. In his thought man is man and no more and no less. V. Tellis-Nayak writes, "The Gandhian revolution in its essence is aimed at resetting man into his rightful position from where the adverse elements of an egoistic society had pulled him down and depersonalized him."<sup>9</sup>

Gandhi was aware of the history of colonialism, and had personally experienced humiliation, because of his colour and nationality. However, in his experience, he had known that discrimination and segregation is harmful to both, the oppressed and the oppressor. Gandhi was not developing his concept of man only in relation to the British empire. He was thinking of all men, irrespective of national, racial, and sexual background. He was interested in the problem of equality, at home as well as abroad. Talking about the untouchables in India, Gandhi wrote:

God did not create men with the badge of superiority or inferiority, and no scripture which labels a human being as inferior or untouchable, because of his birth or her birth, can command our allegiance. It is a denial of God and of truth which is God.<sup>10</sup>

Gandhi made a significant contribution to the status of woman, by treating woman as equal to man. In fact, he gave a higher status to woman because, to him, women symbolized the spiritual dimension of human being, through their ability to suffer and sacrifice for the

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<sup>9</sup>V. Tellis-Nayak, "Gandhi on the Dignity of the Human Person," *Gandhi Marg*, VII:1 (January 1963), 40.

<sup>10</sup>*Harijan*, August 31, 1934, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 45.

other. Gandhi said, "Man and woman are equal in status but not identical. They are a peerless pair being complementary to one another."<sup>11</sup>

By raising the status of women, Gandhi has opened the way for the humanization of men and women in India. The Church in India must take full advantage of Gandhi's challenge and move with even greater force to liberate women from their traditional image of being inferior and subservient to men.

Gandhi's concept of complementarity is integral to his method of *satyagraha*. Mutual growth is possible between two persons, who happen to come in personal contact for any reason, even in a conflict situation. What Gandhi is trying to communicate in his statement is the inter-dependence necessary for the flowering of one's personality. Gandhi raised the status of woman, not only through his statement, but by including them in his programmes. He gave them all the opportunities which belonged to any man. Gandhi writes, "She has the right to participate in the minutest detail of the activity of man, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he."<sup>12</sup> Gandhi says again:

In this non-violent warfare, their contribution should be much greater than men's. To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength, is meant moral power, then woman is unmeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition,

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<sup>11</sup> *Address to the Bhagini Samaj*, February 20, 1918, in *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

is she not more sacrificing, has she not greater power of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women.<sup>13</sup>

Thus Gandhi raised the status of woman very high. As a result of Gandhi's impact many women in India have been able to liberate themselves from the clutches of the traditional Indian society. Perhaps, the election of a woman as the Prime Minister of India is one of the results of Gandhi's influence.

Another important insight of Gandhi has significance for the psychological understanding of man's behavior. Gandhi maintained that a person should not be judged on the basis of his behavior, in other words, a human being should not be equated with his deeds. He wanted to keep the person and his work separate from each other. In this way, Gandhi was able to maintain the dignity of all human beings. Gandhi writes:

Man and his deeds are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked always deserves respect or pity as the case may be. Hate the sin, and not the sinner is a precept which, though easy to understand, is rarely practised and that is why the poison of hatred spread in the world.<sup>14</sup>

Gandhi was laying a foundation for his philosophy of *satyagraha*. His method of *satyagraha* cannot be conceived without the uniqueness of man and his human dignity. The dignity which Gandhi

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<sup>13</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance* (New York: Schocken, 1972), p. 325.

<sup>14</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 436.

attributes to man does not lie in his work or achievement but in his very being. Certainly, this line of thought is in complete agreement with his previous view that man's dignity lies in his soul, rather than in any external feature. Certainly, to judge a man on the basis of his work and external performance is a negation of the human dignity. In other words, man must try to know the real person and the doer. In order to respect a person, one must be careful not to make any judgement about his essential being. However, one may object to the deeds of a person. Gandhi recognized that all men are created by God. Therefore to disrespect any human being is to disrespect the creator. Gandhi says:

It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to attack and resist the author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. For we are all tarred with the same brush and are children of one and the same creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that human being, but with him the whole world.<sup>15</sup>

*The Wholeness of Man.* Even though Gandhi believes in the dual nature of man, he considers man as a whole. His concept of man is, almost, psychosomatic. According to him there is an intimate relationship between body, mind and soul.

Gandhi understands the issue of personal development as a matter of total development, which included body, mind and spirit. Writing on the question of education, he says, "Education can also be understood in another sense; that is, whatever leads to a full

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

or maximum development of all the three, the body, mind and spirit, may also be called education."<sup>16</sup>

Gandhi believes that body has an effect on the mind and the mind on the body. This is why he prescribed physical discipline for the purification of mind. He says, "The object of the various exercises was to strengthen and purify the body in order to secure control of the mind."<sup>17</sup> Writing to Darbari Sadhu, Gandhi makes quite plain the psychosomatic view of human behavior. He wrote,

Just as man dissipates his physical strength through ordinary incontinence, so he dissipates his mental strength through mental incontinence, and, as physical weakness affects the mind, so mental weakness affects the body.<sup>18</sup>

This understanding into the nature of man was the basis of the physical and spiritual discipline which Gandhi expected of his *satyagrahi*. For Gandhi, if the person is not integrated in all three aspects of his personality, he will not be able to become a *satyagrahi*.

*The Freedom of Man.* Gandhi does not give any systematic presentation on the subject of freedom, but freedom plays a very significant role in Gandhi's concept of man.

Gandhi believed that man is free to choose and make decisions, even though his freedom is limited. According to Gandhi, God, as the supreme Power, regulates the affairs of the world. Gandhi says,

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<sup>16</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XXX, 59.

<sup>17</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 94.

<sup>18</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, L, 409-10.

"There is no doubt that He rules our action, and I literally believed that not a blade of grass grows or moves without His will. The free will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, man's freedom is limited by his destiny. However, man is partly responsible for his own destiny. He says,

Man was supposed to be the maker of his own destiny. It is partly true. He can make his destiny only in so far as he is allowed by the Great Power which overrides all our intentions, all our plans, and carries out His plans.<sup>20</sup>

Gandhi's understanding into the nature of freedom is governed by his faith in the traditional doctrine of *karma*. The real freedom is attainable only when one has been able to get out of the cycle of births and deaths. Thus, freedom is only approximate and never absolute. Man is free to choose between alternative courses of action throughout his life. Man determines the character of his self by his free decision in terms of choosing out of the alternative courses of action. For Gandhi, man is not governed by any necessity in his choice of actions. Thus Gandhi says,

Evolution is always experimental. All progress is gained through mistakes and their rectification. . . . This is the law of individual growth. The same law controls social and political evolution also. The right to err, which means the freedom to try experiments, is the universal condition of all progress.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Harijan*, March 23, 1940, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> *Harijan*, April 20, 1947, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Truth is God* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1959), p. 135.

Gandhi believes that complete realization of the ultimate values is not possible for human beings. However, man is free to strive towards perfection. Gandhi says, "I am but a poor struggling soul, yearning to be wholly good--wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed; but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true."<sup>22</sup> In another place, Gandhi remarked, "The goal ever recedes from us. The greater the progress the greater the recognition of our unworthiness. Full effort is full victory."<sup>23</sup> Thus Gandhi understands man as free to act and to make decisions within his own destiny, governed by God and himself. What is required of man is action, effort. For Gandhi, that is sufficient. While recognizing the significance of freedom, Gandhi is not oblivious to the dangerous consequences of man's freedom. He writes, "Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint."<sup>24</sup>

From the point of view of the Indian traditional society, Gandhian concept of freedom is a significant contribution to the dignity of man. In the Indian society, Man's freedom was not only limited but also severely controlled on the basis of one's social

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<sup>22</sup>*Young India*, April 9, 1925, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, p. 66.

<sup>23</sup>*Young India*, March 9, 1922, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>24</sup>*Harajan*, May 27, 1939, cited by J. V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 161.



and sexual identity. Therefore, Gandhi really opened the gates of freedom for the people of India to actualize their unique potentialities. However, his optimism is based on his refusal to take into account the sinful nature of man.

*The Goodness of Man.* According to Gandhi there is an innate goodness in all men. There is no man who is devoid of this fundamental goodness. Of course, Gandhi recognizes that this goodness has been corrupted due to bad institutions. In an interview to Edmond Demeter, Gandhi says, "I affirm, to the contrary, that man is always good and that it is only bad institutions which turn him from the straight road."<sup>25</sup>

Gandhi's belief in the innate goodness of man is based on his assumption of one nature of all men. According to him all men partake of the same nature and therefore the whole mankind is bound to each other. Human nature all over the world is the same. This belief allowed Gandhi to consider all men as his brothers and to reaffirm his view that all men can be changed by non-violent methods. Gandhi declares that, "belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advance of love."<sup>26</sup> The idea of man's innate goodness is related with his idea of the dual nature of man. Therefore goodness

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<sup>25</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XLVIII, 387.

<sup>26</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *My Non-Violence* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1960), p. 81.

belongs to man's spiritual side. Man is good because of his *atman* and not because of his body. According to Gandhi when man is influenced by his bodily needs, he is likely to be corrupted. That is why Gandhi practiced asceticism to control his physical desires.

Since there is a combination of the body and soul, there is also a combination of goodness and evil. According to Gandhi man's basic goodness is derived from his soul and the evil is from his body. Therefore, both the good and the evil are present in the form of potentialities in man. Man is the master of his potentialities and therefore their actualization depends upon his decision. Gandhi writes,

Every thing created by God, animate or inanimate, has its good side and bad side. The wise man, like the fabled bird which separating the cream of milk from its water helps himself to the cream leaving the water alone, will take the good from every thing leaving the bad alone.<sup>27</sup>

Thus Gandhi believed that goodness is present in all human beings. If goodness was not present in man, Gandhi would not have developed his non-violent method to resist evil in man. It was his belief that the change agent must ally himself with the forces of good if he wants to bring change in his opponent. Gandhi says, "We have to make our choice whether we should ally ourselves with the forces of evil or with the forces of good."<sup>28</sup> Gandhi always advised his *satyagrahis* to bring out the good in their opponents rather than to

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<sup>27</sup>D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (Bombay: Jhaveri & Tendulkar, 1951), II, 384.

<sup>28</sup>Gandhi, *Truth is God*, p. 49.

strengthen their evil side. He says, "If you want to convert your opponent you must present to him his better and nobler side. Do not dangle his faults before him."<sup>29</sup>

Gandhi trusted in the innate goodness of man. For Gandhi that is the best point of contact between any two human beings. If men approach each other with the assumption that the other is evil, there is bound to be mutual mistrust. If there is mutual mistrust, the forces of evil will emerge, resulting in violence against each other. Therefore, Gandhi is willing to trust even his enemy, that ultimately he will respond to his trust and love. Gandhi says, "Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for an implicit faith in human nature is the very essence of his creed."<sup>30</sup>

Thus Gandhi develops his method of *satyagraha* with a confidence that the goodness inherent in his opponents will emerge one day. And when that happens, the opponent will become his ally in fighting the evil. The possibilities of change lie in the emergence of basic goodness to take control of one's life. In essence, when the spiritual forces take over the physical forces, man becomes a human being and treats his fellow beings with dignity and respect.

Once again Gandhi is very optimistic about the basic goodness of man. According to him it is not corrupted by sin but only

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<sup>29</sup>Dhawan, p. 135.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

suppressed by man himself and the society. It is always present there to be activated by the goodness of another. The author recognizes that Gandhi has not taken seriously the evil side of man and its effect on the basic goodness of man. However, he cannot ignore the fact, that whatever goodness is present in man, can be activated by love and suffering of others.

### Gandhi's Understanding of the Nature of Change

*The Nature of Change.* For Gandhi any genuine change means growth of one's human potentialities. Man becomes what he already is in his inner being. Change therefore is not an addition to one's being but actualizing what already belongs to him in his human nature. Gandhi says, "When we say that we develop a certain thing, it does not mean that we change its kind or quality, but bring out the qualities, latent in it."<sup>31</sup>

Thus change in Gandhi's thought means growth of latent qualities in man. Gandhi, in his younger days, was always trying to change himself, by adopting new ideas, customs and manners from outside.<sup>32</sup> Later, he recognized that the best change is growth of one's own qualities. This is one of the reasons why Gandhi insisted on self-help and developing indigenous methods. Instead of taking the new ideas from outside, he discovered ideas in his own religion, culture

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<sup>31</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XXX, 58.

<sup>32</sup>Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 51.

and personality.

Thus change in Gandhi does not mean becoming a different person than oneself but to continue to have one's own identity. Gandhi was not interested in change at the cost of losing one's identity. He was always emphasizing the need to change,<sup>33</sup> but always in the context of one's own potentialities.

As we study Gandhi's *satyagraha*, as a method of personal change, we become more and more aware that Gandhi was not interested, merely, in a change of behavior or in giving up one's ideas and adopting new ideas. He wanted people to give up those traits and characteristics which do not belong to human nature and are not inherent to one's personality. In this way, Gandhi was conservative but also progressive. According to him there is a treasure in each person, and one must become aware of that treasure and do his utmost to actualize his personality.

What we discover in Gandhi is a developmental concept. This concept dominated his whole life and affected his relationships with his opponents. He wanted his opponents to realize and become what they inherently were. He wanted to turn away from a false sense of self-realization to a genuine self-realization.<sup>34</sup>

Gandhi was interested in constructive changes, the changes which will transform a person into a human being. Any change which

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<sup>33</sup> *Harijan*, April 29, 1933, cited in L. Fisher, *The Essential Gandhi* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 313.

<sup>34</sup> Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 227.

was regressive or had the seeds of actualizing the animal nature, was to be discouraged. Seifert and Clinebell also give a similar interpretation of change:

We are here speaking of constructive change, moving in the direction of greater fulfillment of man's highest potentialities. Growth is a developmental concept, usually applied to individual persons and their relationships, involving the unfolding of inherent potentialities.<sup>35</sup>

The author agrees with Gandhi's concept of personal change as actualizing one's latent potentialities. This particular view is likely to build independent persons, with confidence of their own powers. Of course, there is a danger that this point of view might lead to introversion and preoccupation with one's own self development. However, according to Gandhi one can overcome this danger by caring and helping others to grow.

*The Direction of Change.* Change in Gandhian thought does not lead to self-realization, in isolation. A genuine change must lead to a higher type of relationship with other human beings. Gandhi was trying to actualize his being in order to find *moksha* (salvation), to see God "face to face."

Gandhi was interested in change in both the individual and the society. According to him, social institutions are the products of man and they will survive as long as people support them. Therefore, a change in society is a reflection of the conditions of the

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<sup>35</sup>H. Seifert and H. J. Clinebell, Jr., *Personal Growth and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 10.

people. As such, Gandhi was more interested in people rather than in institutions.

Gandhi believed that any change in the systems or institutions of a society, without a genuine change in the motives of people, will not bring desirable and constructive change. By constructive change, Gandhi meant, those changes which will help men and women to realize their inner potentialities.

Gandhi, very much wanted India to become independent of the British rule. However, he was concerned more about the personal change of Indian people rather than the external change, in the form of independence from Britain. Gandhi says:

My aim is not simply to rid India of British domination. I want to liberate India absolutely from every kind of domination. Hence, it follows that for me the movement for independence is a movement of personal self-purification.<sup>36</sup>

Gandhi was well aware that a mere transfer of power from one group to another would not solve the problem of the people of India. It was not the change of the Government but the change of hearts which was the aim and final goal of Gandhi. This is what he wanted of the British also. He did not want the British to hand over the government without a genuine change of heart, a change which would make Britain what it claimed to be.

It is recorded that once an English officer complained to Gandhi by saying, "Do you think that we do not feel it when thousands of your fellow country men suffer? Do you think we have no heart?"

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<sup>36</sup>L. Corman, *La-Violence* (Paris: Stork, 1942), p. 32.

To which Gandhi replied, "No! I don't think so, but I want you to experience this suffering, for it is precisely your hearts that I want to touch. When they have been sufficiently touched we shall be able to negotiate."<sup>37</sup>

It was the firm belief of Gandhi that genuine change begins with people, rather than with systems. It does not mean that one should not try to change systems, when systems block the growth of individuals. But a mere change of system will not effect any genuine change. Men must take responsibility for initiating changes. Gandhi objected to those who propounded that a mere change from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy would remove the ills of the people. Gandhi wrote:

But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbors. If we have no love for our neighbors, no change, however revolutionary, can do us any good.<sup>38</sup>

Gandhi dealt with the problem of the caste system on the same basis. He did not feel the necessity to make any major change in the traditional caste system. His attack was on the people and not the structure. Gandhi recognized the evil of untouchability, as the most cruel and dehumanizing aspect of the caste system. However, he was opposed to the abolition of the caste system, while he encouraged people to give up the practice of untouchability. He spent a lot of time in the eradication of this evil, by encouraging Hindus in

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<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>38</sup>*Young India*, October 7, 1926, cited in Fisher, p. 287.



changing their hearts. It was his faith that, unless man's heart is converted, a mere change in the structure will not deliver man from his exploitation. Man will invent other forms of structures in the place of caste, and exploit men, maybe in more cruel ways. What Gandhi was interested in was the basic root of evil, which lies in the heart of men and not outside. He wanted the Hindu people to become aware of their sin against the untouchables and to change their attitudes towards them, by treating them as equal.

Gandhi in response to B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the untouchables, published his views on the problem of eradication of untouchability. Gandhi published this statement in the first issue of *Harijan*, with the following comment on Ambedkar's position:

As to the burden of his message, the opinion he holds about the caste system is shared by many educated Hindus. I have not, however, been able to share that opinion. I do not believe that the caste system, even as distinguished from *varnashrama*, to be an 'odious and vicious dogma.' It has its limitations and its defects, but there is nothing sinful about it, as there is about untouchability, and if it is a by-product of the caste system it is only in the same sense that an ugly growth is of a body, or weeds of a crop. It is as wrong to destroy caste because of the outcaste, as it would be to destroy a body because of an ugly growth in it, or a crop because of the weeds.<sup>39</sup>

Thus it is quite evident that Gandhi was a conservative as far as this particular change of a system was concerned.

The author does not agree with Gandhi on this issue. However, he is in full agreement that a mere change of structures is not an answer to man's problems. A change in both respects is necessary, but

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<sup>39</sup>*Harijan*, February 11, 1933, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, pp. 161-162.

we must begin with people rather than structures. The author feels that any change in the social structures must be born out of love and concern for man and not out of some utopian organizational goal. If structures are built without any concern for man, dehumanization is bound to occur. Any advantage of a change in a structure will depend upon the people. Structures in themselves have no healing capacity, without the intention of men to benefit from such a change. On the other hand, structures built on the basis of pure utilitarian motives will be harmful for men.

The author thinks that personal change in itself, without a simultaneous change in the social structure, is not sufficient to humanize any society. In India, there is an urgent need to change some of the social structures, for example, the caste system, which have perpetuated dehumanization for a long time.

*The Morality of Change.* Gandhi recognized the Hindu traditional theory of *Karma* and its implications for change. However, Gandhi introduced the element of freedom and morality into the process of change. According to the traditional theory of *karma*, change is more or less predetermined. Gandhi recognized the limitations of man's finitude and his destiny.<sup>40</sup> Thus man is able to act within a given destiny.

He can use his freedom to act and to decide. Man has been

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<sup>40</sup> *Harijan*, April 20, 1947, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, *Ibid.*, p. 64.

evolving from a lower to a higher level. He is not an object to be manipulated by the external forces. If man has been evolving from a lower level to a higher level, it is because of man himself. He is responsible for his own becoming. He is the cause of his own evolution. Of course, Gandhi always recognized that, since God is present in each person, man's contribution to his own evolution, is dependent upon the grace of God.<sup>41</sup> In fact, man evolves as he comes closer and closer to what God wants him to become. He becomes human in the process of listening to his inner voice--the voice of God.

For Gandhi man has freedom and, therefore, his actions must be governed by his freedom. Any action, which does not issue out of conscious freedom, is considered immoral. Thus morality is a matter of using one's freedom. "No action which is not voluntary," says Gandhi, "can be called moral. So as long as we act like machines, there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done conscientiously and as a matter of duty. Any action that is dictated by fear or by coercion of any kind ceases to be moral."<sup>42</sup>

This gives us Gandhi's understanding of what it means to change as well as to bring change in others. Both have to be governed by morality. This is in line with Gandhi's understanding of self-respect and dignity which belongs to all human beings. To respect

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<sup>41</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 332.

<sup>42</sup>N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), p. 254.

another person is to respect his freedom. Change cannot be forced upon another person without violating the integrity of another person.

Gandhi said:

How can I, the champion of *ahimsa*, compel anyone to perform even a good act? Has not a well known Englishman said that to make mistakes as freeman is better than being in bondage in order to avoid them? I believe in the truth of this. The reason is obvious. The mind of a man who remains good under compulsion cannot improve, in fact it worsens. And when compulsion is removed all the defects well up to the surface with even greater force.<sup>43</sup>

No genuine change is possible if it is brought about under pressure. Gandhi realizes that freedom is essential for a person who wants to grow. Any superficial change, for the sake of making adjustment or compromise, is bound to produce harmful consequences to the person. Now it does not mean that Gandhi is an anarchist as some have implied.<sup>44</sup> Instead, he is a realist. He recognizes the place of an individual, only, in the context of society. He recognizes the need of restraining people, even when violence is used. However, this violence is a part of non-violence and is not opposed to the main philosophy of Gandhi. Gandhi said,

I have come to see what I did not see clearly before that there is non-violence in violence. This is the big change which has come about. I had not fully realized the duty of restraining a drunkard from doing evil, or killing a dog in agony or one infected with rabies. In all these instances, violence is in fact non-violence.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Harijan*, September 29, 1946, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, p. 69.

<sup>44</sup> Dhawan, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XIV, 505.

Gandhi realizes that some actions, taken in the spirit of love without any intention to coerce another, may have the impact of coercion. However, his extreme emphasis on the universal applicability of non-violent resistance led him to ignore the importance of coercion by intent. The author feels that there are situations and dilemmas where coercion is not only necessary but the only morally correct choice. Seifert has also criticized the non-violent methods on this point. He writes:

If non-violent resistance are to be criticized whenever they employ excessive form of coercion, they should also be criticized when they use too little coercion to gain a sufficiently important goal. Not to use responsible pressure under such circumstances is to allow continuance of even more damaging evils, such as discrimination or exploitation resort to violence more likely.<sup>46</sup>

*The Problem of Ends and Means in Change.* The idea of morality in Gandhi's thought with regard to change, is very much related to the problem of means and ends. How can a change agent bring about change in another person without violating the self-respect and dignity of a person? According to Gandhi, the goal is very much dependent upon the means. The goal is always a consequence of the means, used in achieving that goal.

Gandhi recognized that only non-violent means bring constructive changes. In 1933, Gandhi wrote a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru:

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<sup>46</sup>H. Seifert, *Conquest by Suffering* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 114.

I have concerned myself more, . . . with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. If we can take care of them, the attainment of the goal is assured. I feel that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of means.<sup>47</sup>

Once again, we realize that Gandhi has been influenced by the *theory of karma*--that every act has its own independent result which affects both the subject and the object of the act. Therefore, the quality of change, in another person, is dependent upon the means employed by the change agent.

Gandhi was very well aware that any change brought about by violent means will result in violent consequences. One may bring change in another person by immoral means but the element of immorality will enter into both, the person and the change agent. Such a change, cannot but produce a momentum away from the process of humanization. Gandhi observes:

As the means, so the end. There is no veil of separation between means and end. Indeed the creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception.<sup>48</sup>

Thus according to Gandhi one can only have control over his own behavior and the means he uses to interact with other persons. The change agent is only optimistic and not determinative of the change in another person. This optimism, on the part of the change agent, arises out of two facts: first, he is free of anxiety and

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<sup>47</sup>Tendulkar, III, 216.

<sup>48</sup>*Young India*, July 17, 1924, cited by Bandyopadhyaya, p. 378.

guilt, because of the purity of means, second, he has faith in the inherent "goodness" in all human nature. Because of these two facts, the change agent is never discouraged but hopes always in all situations. If anxiety develops in the change agent, he is expected to examine the nature and the quality of his means. He may have to fast or meditate in order to purify his means. He must make sure that he has been acting in the spirit of truth and love, and not in the spirit of hatred and discouragement.

To examine the means is to examine one's own being. The change agent is himself a means, which cannot be separated from the means he uses, in bringing about change in another person. This means that the person, who is an "object" of change, is to be regarded as a person, worthy of all attention of the change agent. If the means employed by the change agent are separated from the change agent, the process of manipulation and dehumanization immediately enter. The person becomes an object to be manipulated by techniques.

*The Dynamics of Change.* The concept of *satyagraha* has the dimensions of order and change. Nirmal Minz says, "Gandhi's view of reality involves both order and change. His concept of *satya* embodies the stable, permanent, and orderly dimension of this reality; his concept of *Ahimsa* stands for the changing, becoming and dynamic aspect of it."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Nirmal Minz, "Gandhiji and the Formal Hindu Christian Dialogue," *Religion and Society*, XVI:3 (September 1969), 39.

Gandhi is interested in genuine change. A genuine change is always in the direction of the absolute. This absolute is represented by order, calmness and bliss.<sup>50</sup> However, man is unable to attain the absolute and therefore, he is in a constant need to change.<sup>51</sup> Thus change is a life-long task, demanding full attention of the person.

Whenever, a person feels that he is wrong, he is motivated to make a change. It is the full realization of the wrong, which creates the process of change. Gandhi says, "We are seekers after truth. We change whenever we find ourselves in the wrong. I changed like that many times in my life."<sup>52</sup>

Thus it is the awareness of being wrong which becomes the source of motivation for change. Gandhi says, "If we but change our ideas, it will take us only a second to effect a change in our conduct accordingly."<sup>53</sup> But, this is not a mere matter of mind. It is a matter of the whole being. A mere intellectual awareness of being wrong is not a sufficient motivation for making the necessary change. Gandhi believes that ideas must be assimilated in one's being. Thus, ideas must be examined and then must be made one's own. Then, such ideas will have the power to bring genuine change. The whole being will respond to the idea. There will not be any conflict between the

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<sup>50</sup> Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> *Young India*, July 30, 1931, p. 196, cited in Bondurant, p. 17.

<sup>52</sup> Gora (G. Ramachandra Rao), *An Atheist with Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1951), p. 31.

<sup>53</sup> Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XIX, 519.



mind and the behavior. K. Santhanam writes, "For him (Gandhi) 'Truth' was not a matter of language or even merely thought. It embraced all psychological processes resulting in right action."<sup>54</sup>

Gandhi believed that man is driven by the animal nature, he is self-centered and seeks his own security. In the process of seeking self-security, he creates defenses in his system and becomes impervious to feelings. His heart is hardened. His field of vision is limited, his perception faulty and he cannot judge between wrong and right. Whatever satisfies his bodily needs becomes right. A person governed by his animal passion does not listen to the "inner-voice," and therefore is incapable of making a genuine change. Reasoning is muddled. He rationalizes for his mistakes and wrongs and never attempts to make any change.

Gandhi believed that men who are violent, often become hardened in their feelings. Those who exploit others, become so degraded, that they are not in touch with their "inner-voice." Gandhi felt that the only way to reach these people is through a suffering love.<sup>55</sup> The self-suffering on the part of the change agent manifests love and respect for the other person. It produces a moral force which persuades the person to realize mistakes in his actions.

According to Gandhi, such people can be changed only when their conscience has been evoked, through some dramatic, symbolic,

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<sup>54</sup>K. Santhanam, *Satyagraha and State* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1960), p. 2.

<sup>55</sup>Kripalani, p. 118.

representation of suffering--love. According to Gandhi the conscience of another person cannot be reached by coercive methods, but only through love and suffering. This is the way of melting the heart<sup>56</sup> of the wrong doer. The wrong doer is able to get in touch with his "inner voice." The truth is "dictated by the interior voice."<sup>57</sup> But following this truth, depends upon the inner quality of the person.

Even though a person is fully responsible for making appropriate changes, after listening to his "inner voice" he cannot make changes, at least in the direction of growth, if there is no love and forgiveness available to the person.

Gandhi is talking about the mechanism of guilt. Gandhi is fully aware that a mere production of guilt is not sufficient. The production of guilt, in itself, has no power to bring changes in the person. In fact, it may, even, harden the heart of the person and produce more violence and hostility.

There is only one way that guilt can have a healing effect on a person. This can happen only when a guilty person experiences a genuine love. When a person feels love and forgiveness, he is free to deal with his guilt in a creative way. In this way Gandhi understood the psychodynamics of change, brought by self-suffering. Maryse Choisy expresses this very well:

The whole dynamics of non-violence comes from the fact that it succeeds in totally dissipating the unconscious feeling of guilt in the non-violent, while it simultaneously actualizes a

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<sup>56</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XV, 268.

<sup>57</sup>Corman, pp. 15f.

proportionate sense of guilt in the adversary. It is the guilty conscience that makes him vulnerable. But to the extent that the non-violent is prompted by love, he not only convinces his opponent of his guilt but also helps him to accept it. It can no longer be projected into a form of paranoia. On the contrary, it inhibits the aggressive urge. Because, at the very moment of its discovery the adversary feels himself to be forgiven by the non-violent.<sup>58</sup>

We can conclude by saying that Gandhi understood the dynamics of change in the context of love and forgiveness. For him change was not impersonal, but intimately personal and related with one's inner being. Even as it was personal, it was also communal. It was the love and forgiveness which came from one's community, and lifted him to a level of common humanity, from where he could make adequate change, as a free person, with self-respect and human dignity.

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<sup>58</sup> Maryse Choisy in *Psyche* (1948), p. 11, cited by P. Regamey, *Non-Violence and the Christian Conscience* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 220.

## CHAPTER III

### A STUDY OF GANDHI'S SATYAGRAHA AS A METHOD OF PERSONAL CHANGE

#### A Definition of Satyagraha

Before making any attempt to define Gandhi's *satyagraha*, one must keep in mind that *satyagraha* was an essential feature in Gandhi's experiment with truth. Thus this experimental approach, on the part of Gandhi, leaves a legacy for other social scientists to further explore the concept of *satyagraha*. In fact, this further exploration will not only be justified but will be in line with the very meaning of the word *satyagraha*.

I have already shown how the word *satyagraha*<sup>1</sup> had its origin during the struggle of the Indian people, against the white government in South Africa. From the very beginning Gandhi wanted to introduce an element of activities in his method of *satyagraha*. He wanted to develop his method not from the point of view of weakness but of strength. However, Gandhi was not thinking of physical strength but spiritual and moral strength. As such Gandhi writes:

Satyagraha differs from Passive Resistance as the North Pole from the South. The latter has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for

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<sup>1</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Madras: Ganesan, 1928), p. 172.

the purpose of gaining one's end, whereas the former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi explains further, that his method of *satyagraha* is based upon truth. As such the method is an attempt to hold on to truth, in the midst of temptation and crisis. For Gandhi the strength of a person lies in his ability to hold on to truth, even when he is subjected to fear of physical and emotional injury.

In the beginning Gandhi was in search of a principle which would guide his movement. He writes:

The principle called Satyagraha came into being before that name was invented. Indeed when it was born, I myself could not say what it was. In Gujarati also we used the English phrase 'passive resistance' to describe it. When in a meeting of Europeans I found that the term 'passive resistance' was too narrowly construed, that it was supposed to be a weapon of the weak, that it could be characterized by hatred, and that it could finally manifest itself as violence, I had to demur to all these statements and explain the real nature of the Indian movement.<sup>3</sup>

For Gandhi, *satyagraha* is a comprehensive term and it has multidimensional unity. Therefore, *satyagraha* becomes a philosophy of his non-violent resistance against his opponents. At other times, *satyagraha*, represents a principle by which he must guide all the facets of his method. And sometimes, *satyagraha* itself becomes a method.

Gandhi called *satyagraha* also 'truth-force,' 'love-force' and

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<sup>2</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance* (New York: Schocken, 1972), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 318.

'soul-force.' Gandhi writes, "Its root meaning is holding on to truth, hence truth-force. I have also called it Love-force or Soul-force."<sup>4</sup> It was never a physical force. In all these three concepts, Gandhi was conveying, that his method involves the use of inner resources, rather than, resorting to any external sources. While Gandhi talks about the inner resources of man, he recognizes that these resources have no power without the help of God. According to Gandhi, God lives in all men. In fact, Gandhi says, "Truth is God."<sup>5</sup>

*Satyagraha*, according to Gandhi, was invented to replace all methods which create dehumanization and make man less than man. His method was meant to replace methods of violence.

Explaining to Lord Hunter, Gandhi said,

It is a movement intended to replace methods of violence and a movement based entirely upon truth. It is, as I have conceived it, an extension of the domestic law on the political field, and any experience has led me to the conclusion that, that movement, and that alone, can rid India of the possibility of violence spreading throughout the length and breadth of the land, for the redress of grievance.<sup>6</sup>

In this passage Gandhi calls *satyagraha* as a movement; at other places he calls it a religion. Thus there are many usages which Gandhi attributes to the phrase *satyagraha*. However, *satyagraha* is at least a method for Gandhi to accomplish his main purpose.

*Satyagraha*, as a method, according to Gandhi, is not limited

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<sup>4</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

only to social and political problems but is applicable to almost all situations of conflict. No matter under what conditions *satyagraha* is used, it is meant to bring change of hearts, in men, against whom it is directed. Gandhi says:

Satyagraha literally means insistence on truth. This insistence arms the votary with matchless power. This power or force is connoted by the word Satyagraha. *Satyagraha* to be genuine may be offered against one's wife or one's children, against rulers, against fellow citizens, even against the whole world.<sup>7</sup>

Thus after examining many definitions of *satyagraha*, as given by Gandhi, it becomes clear that Gandhi was not too much concerned with the mechanical aspects of his method of *satyagraha*; although, Gandhi had a great organizing capacity to plan every single detail of his *satyagraha*. Gandhi was interested in the power, which he could exercise through his method in changing people. Joan V. Bondurant, writes that, "Satyagraha became something more than a method of resistance to particular legal norms. It became an instrument of struggle for positive objectives and for fundamental change."<sup>8</sup>

*Satyagraha* was an instrument, through which Gandhi was able to get in touch with his opponents, on a deeper level, with a definite aim of converting them to truth. It was a way of life for Gandhi, which affected all his relationships.

We must keep in mind that Gandhi, in using the method of *satyagraha*, was binding himself with his opponents, in a bond of

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<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>8</sup>J. V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 3-4.

creative love. The method was not directed completely against his opponents. In a very real sense, it was directed, also, towards himself. The possibility of change existed on both sides. His method is like a double-edged sword. It strikes in both directions. In fact, it works first in the *satyagrahi*. A *satyagrahi*, who does not accept the power of *satyagraha* in his own life, is not able to offer a genuine *satyagraha*. Gandhi says that *satyagraha* brings blessing to both persons.

#### A Further Exploration of Satyagraha in Terms of its Essential Elements

Joan Bondurant writes, "By one interpretation it is possible to argue that *satyagraha* is the heart of every Gandhian pronouncement, that *satyagraha* is the reagent of every concept with which Gandhi identified himself."<sup>9</sup>

Thus *satyagraha* is in the center of Gandhi's thinking. All other concepts, used by Gandhi, take their meaning and significance only as they relate to this central concept. But, at the same time, *satyagraha* emerges in its purity, as a result of its interaction with other concepts. There seems to be a mutuality between these concepts. They seem to support each other and, in the process, each concept begins to emerge in its reality. This is perhaps the genius of Gandhi, that he could develop a concept which could be called by different names, and yet maintain its integrity and function according

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<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.



to its own principles.

The most important features or elements which fit in the whole schema of Gandhian concept, are three: truth, non-violence, and suffering. They are all interdependent and, therefore, no one element can be understood fully, and clearly, without a reference to other concepts. There seems to be an organic or holistic relationship, creating a whole. Unless, all these concepts are understood in regard to the center, one may be likely to get diverted and arrive at a different conclusion, and thus confuse Gandhi's concepts with other negative concepts. Bondurant writes:

The failure to grasp these fundamentals, the failure to discover the manner in which their delicate articulation constitutes the process of satyagraha, may lead to the adoption of outward forms which resemble the Gandhian technique but which are scarcely different from traditional methods of strike, of fasting, or of demonstration.<sup>10</sup>

It is almost obligatory to explore the Gandhian concepts of truth, non-violence and self-suffering, in order to understand *satyagraha*.

*Truth.* An understanding of this very basic and most fundamental category in the Gandhian concept of *satyagraha* is a prerequisite to any adequate understanding of *satyagraha*. In a very real sense, all other concepts find their functional value, as they relate to this nuclear force. While dealing with the concept of Satya (truth), we must take into account, that we are dealing with a concept of Eastern thought. However, it was the genius of Gandhi that he integrated both Eastern and Western mind. Gandhi has been able to

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.

attract scholars from the East as well as from the West. His thought is so much pregnant with insights, applicable to both East and West, that scholars of great repute, have taken seriously his concept of truth and his method of *satyagraha*. They have tried to expound his concept in a universal language and therefore have made available his concepts to both believers in violence and non-violence. This has been done in a sympathetic way by Erik H. Erikson. He writes:

In studying your method of Satyagraha, I have become increasingly convinced that psychoanalysis, not if judged by its physicalistic terminology and theory but if understood as it is practiced and lived according to the rules and intentions of its originator, amounts to a *truth method*, with all the implications which the word truth has in Satyagraha.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, Erikson goes to the extent of saying, that psychoanalysis and the method of *satyagraha* are very similar. He writes, "This, I submit, is more than a vague analogy; it is a correspondence in method and a convergence in human values which may well be of historical, if not evolutionary, significance."<sup>12</sup>

If Gandhi's truth is so very important that a great psychoanalyst like Erikson not only writes a book on Gandhi's truth, but shows his affinity with Gandhi, we must take great care in exploring this concept. Erikson says, "I sensed an affinity between Gandhi's truth and the insight of modern psychology."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>E. H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: Norton, 1969), pp. 244-245.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 439.

Gandhi, as a Hindu, was searching after the Truth in order to attain self-realization or *moksha*. However, he never claimed that he had found the absolute truth. As such Gandhi writes:

. . . I am but a seeker after truth. I claim to have found the way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, that is, to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all strength I possess, because it is rare thing for a man to know his own limitations.<sup>14</sup>

For Gandhi, the absolute truth is none other than God. In Tillich's<sup>15</sup> terminology, it is the ultimate concern. Commenting on the derivation of the word *satyagraha* Gandhi writes,

The word Satya (Truth) is derived from Sat, which means 'being.' Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why Sat or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth. It will be realized that Sat or Satya is the only correct and fully significant name for God.<sup>16</sup>

His choice of the word "Satya," and its relation to God, was Gandhi's own way to bring unity among all religions. Thus the word "satya" has the power of uniting people rather than of dividing people. In a country where there is proliferation of religions and where animosity and hostility exist between various religions, Gandhi was using a powerful word, to unite people of different religions into one nation. Gandhi made a distinction between absolute and

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<sup>14</sup> *Young India*, November 17, 1931, cited by Bondurant, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), I, 211.

<sup>16</sup> Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 38.

relative truth. For him the absolute truth cannot be conceived in its full reality. Gandhi says:

But it is impossible for us to realize perfect truth so long as we are imprisoned in the mortal frame. We can only visualize it in our imagination. We cannot, through the instrumentality of the ephemeral body, see face to face Truth which is eternal.<sup>17</sup>

However, men are able to conceive only a relative truth. This relative truth must guide the path of a person. Gandhi states:

There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest. . . . But as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it.<sup>18</sup>

Thus it is not the absolute truth but the relative truth which plays its role in the method of *satyagraha*. In sinful existence, men cannot claim more than the relative truth. Bondurant writes:

The 'truth' concept which enters into the technique of *satyagraha* is clearly not that of the absolute. As he pursued his experiments with *satyagraha* the relative character of truth as an operative principle became the stronger.<sup>19</sup>

Gandhi recognized that every one gains insight, into the nature of truth, according to one's own perception. Therefore, there is bound to be some difference between two persons' perception of truth. In fact, Gandhi believed that it is in the nature of truth that one must discover truth on his own and must not blindly accept

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>18</sup> Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>19</sup> Bondurant, p. 17.

the truth of another. Therefore, it is almost a duty, on the part of a person, to search and arrive at a conclusion of his own. Gandhi writes:

In spite, however, of such devotion, what may appear as truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. But that need not worry the seeker. Where there is honest effort, it will be realized that what appear to be different truths are like apparently different countless leaves of the same tree. . . . Hence there is nothing wrong in every one following Truth according to one's lights. Indeed it is one's duty to do so.<sup>20</sup>

What is required on the part of a seeker is an attitude of honesty and an authentic existence. This honesty does not come to a person in his apathetic condition. It is costly and therefore requires suffering. One is expected to suffer willingly for the sake of truth, to the point of death. Thus Gandhi says:

For the quest of Truth involves *tapas*--self-suffering, sometimes even into death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearing for long.<sup>21</sup>

Gandhi's concept of *Satya* is not idealistic and abstract. This concept is practical and action-oriented. Truth is always expressed in concrete forms. As such it is not a *satya* (truth) of the holy men who discover truth in caves, away from people, but a truth of this world. It is discovered in the world of men. This truth is related to the problems of people and it has the power to bring new life through transformation. This truth is more than a

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<sup>20</sup>Extracts from M. K. Gandhi, *From Yeravada Mandir* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1932), cited in his *Selected Writings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 42.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

verbal truth. It is an expression of the very essence of one's being.

Gandhi writes:

Generally speaking, observing the law of Truth is merely understood to mean that we must speak the truth. But we in the Ashram understand the word *Satya* or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, Truth in action.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, Gandhi's 'truth' is not just a mere insight in the form of an idea which could be expressed in words. But his 'truth' is much more powerful than insight. It is a truth which has a power to actualize itself. Any insight which cannot be put into action, has no power to transform a person. Such an insight, instead, produces despair and lack of confidence in one's own integrity. Gandhi was talking about an integrative personality, characterized by an ability to actualize one's own truth. Integration does not mean an absence of conflict but presence of cooperation and a spirit of harmony, working as a whole. As such, there may be contradictions in one's personality but all the different elements work for the harmony of the person. They all work towards the actualization of truth as perceived by the person. All work in harmony for the common quest for the Absolute Truth. Truth for Gandhi is knowledge. It is the full awareness of one's being, in any situation. This full awareness brings joy to the person, no matter under what conditions he may be. Gandhi writes:

And where there is Truth, there is also knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word *Chit* or knowledge is associated with the name of God. And where there is true knowledge there is always bliss (Ananda). Sorrow has no place there.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>23</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 38.

For Gandhi, Truth is the main principle governing the activities of one's life, if one is devoted to it. If one lives his life by this principle, he is free from any confusion in times of conflicts. Truth helps a person to make the best decision, in that particular situation. As such, there is no situation which cannot be dealt with. There is no pressure on the person, when he is called upon to make a decision, or to encounter any person, or any situation. Life is organized and things work out in a systematic manner for the person. Gandhi writes:

Devotion to this Truth is the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centered in Truth. Truth should be the very breadth of our life. When once this stage in the pilgrim's progress is reached, other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it would be impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.<sup>24</sup>

Thus Gandhi was in search of truth all his life. He was seeking God through action. He was acting in the realm of human existence. He wanted others to join with him in this search for truth. But he knew this search required unity and service.

He was interested not in the superficial unity of human race, but in the authentic unity, which will express the true nature of truth. Gandhi was therefore in search of truth which will elevate human existence to a higher level, where truth will finally govern all relationships. Bondurant puts it very well:

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

To realize the truth of human unity meant, for Gandhi, not only service to his fellow man, but the individual's effort to adjust his demands and his immediate position in the light of opposing demands which he took to be erroneous. Adherence to the truth meant adherence to the moral truth as originally understood by him who would assert it *until* persuaded by interaction with an opponent that he had erred.<sup>25</sup>

In equating Truth with God, Gandhi was rejecting the personhood of God which Christianity considers as essential to the understanding of God and establishing personal relationship with Him. However, Gandhi manifested a personal relationship with God in his life and work. Furthermore we do not agree with Gandhi that the knowledge of God can be attained by our own search; we believe that God has revealed Himself to us through Jesus Christ and continues to reveal through His Holy spirit.

*Non-violence.* Non-violence is another element which constitutes Gandhi's method of *satyagraha*. Non-violence or *ahimsa* is Gandhi's method of approaching truth. Gandhi says:

Nevertheless *ahimsa* is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahimsa* is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later.<sup>26</sup>

Gandhi writes again, "I want to see God face to face. God, I know is Truth. For me the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence-ahimsa-love."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Bondurant, p. 110.

<sup>26</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup>J. P. Chander, (ed.) *Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Lahor: Indian Printing Works, 1945), p. 266.



We shall show later on, how non-violence in Gandhi's thought is also called love. But here, let us see how non-violence becomes the means of achieving the end of *satyagraha*. If this becomes clear, there are many possibilities of satyagraha, which could be applied to solve human problems and humanize the human race.

The following is a dialogue between Gandhi and the counsel of the Hunter committee.<sup>28</sup>

Sir Chimanlal: With regard to your Satyagraha doctrine, so far as I understand it, it involves the pursuit of truth and in that pursuit you invite suffering on yourself and not cause violence to anybody else.

Mr. Gandhi: Yes, Sir.

Q: However, honestly a man may strive in his search for truth his notions of truth may be different from the notions of others. Who then is to determine the truth?

A: The individual himself would determine that.

Q: Different individuals would have different views as to truth. Would that not lead to confusion?

A: I do not think so.

Q: Honestly striving after truth is different in every case.

A: That is why the non-violence part was a necessary corollary. Without that there would be confusion and worse.

Thus non-violence is the means whereby truth is discovered, without doing violence to another person, who may hold a different interpretation of truth. There is no passive compromise and giving

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<sup>28</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, pp. 29-30. The Hunter Committee was appointed by the Government of India to investigate the Punjab massacre staged by the British in the sacred Sikh city of Amritsar on April 13, 1919. See L. Fisher, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 185-189.

up of one's own truth, but an active pursuit after truth which is in the nature of non-violence. Gandhi is so convinced of the need of non-violence in the process of searching for truth, that he is able to affirm the impossibility of arriving at truth without non-violence.

Gandhi writes:

It is perhaps clear from the foregoing, that without *ahimsa* it is not possible to seek and find Truth. *Ahimsa* and *Truth* are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to distangle and separate them. They are like two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc.<sup>29</sup>

Gandhi, in using the concept of *ahimsa*, is no doubt influenced by the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist traditions. However, he does not feel that he is bound to their interpretations. He lifts the concept of *ahimsa* from its general and broad understanding and gives it a human dimension. This introduction of human dimension is the creative contribution of Gandhi to the traditional understanding of *ahimsa*.

Gandhi writes:

*Ahimsa* is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of *Ahimsa*. But it is its least expression.

And then, Gandhi goes on to say:

The principle of *ahimsa* is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs.<sup>30</sup>

Gandhi was humanizing the concept of non-violence and liberating it from its unfortunate interpretation. He was successful in giving a new meaning to this concept, only as he equated it with love.

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<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

He was touching the very foundation of human personality, the very core of man. He was touching the source of man's possibilities, to humanize himself and other people. To lift man above the animal level and thus open the possibilities of further evolution of man, to a much higher level. Erikson catches this glimpse in Gandhi's thought and thus he writes.

With all respect for the traditional translation of *ahimsa*, I think Gandhi implied in it, besides a refusal not to do physical harm, a determination not to violate another person's essence. For even where one may not be able to avoid harming or hurting, forcing or demeaning another whenever one must coerce him, one should try even doing so, not to violate his essence, for such violence can only evoke counter-violence, which may end in a kind of truce, but not in truth. For *ahimsa* as acted upon by Gandhi not only means not to hurt another, it means to respect the truth in him.<sup>31</sup>

Respecting the truth in another can be done only when one is able to respect another's integrity. Truth demands that one practice love and non-violence, otherwise one will be led astray into falsehood and to a vicious cycle, from where a return becomes complicated. Where man has been dehumanized, and made into an object to be manipulated, the law of love cannot be practiced.

Gandhi is not talking about the ordinary love but a love which is self-giving. It is almost like *agape* in the Christian sense.

M. M. Thomas writes:

It is generally admitted today that the Gandhian application of the principles of *ahimsa* have greatly enriched our understanding of love when it is applied as technique for the solution of political and social conflicts. In the process, the concept of *ahimsa* has itself changed in many of its emphasis. It has

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<sup>31</sup>Erikson, p. 412.

tended to lose much of its past rigidity and dogmatism and has acquired some of the freedom characteristics of agape.<sup>32</sup>

Gandhi himself expounds this fact in his own words:

This law of love is nothing but a law of truth. Without truth there is no love; without truth it may be affection, as for one's country, to the injury of others; or infatuation, as of young man for a girl; or love may be unreasoning and blind, as of ignorant parents for their children. Love transcends all animality and is never partial. Satyagraha has therefore been described as a coin, on whose face you read love and on the reverse you read truth.<sup>33</sup>

Thus Gandhi makes an attempt to liberate even the concept of love. A love which is selfish is not a source of non-violence. It has a tendency to do violence to the objects of love, in a deceptive manner.

This love of which Gandhi speaks is not a product of sentimentality or the product of any desire for one's own end. This is a love in which mutuality exists, and one is willing to sacrifice everything, including his own life, not out of fear or submission or cowardice but out of strength to bear suffering for others. In the process, truth is not sacrificed; neither is love. Both truth and love find themselves in a creative tension, which results in growth. Lahey puts it this way:

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<sup>32</sup>M. M. Thomas, "Editorial," *Religion and Society*, X:1 (March 1963), 3.

<sup>33</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1971), XVII, 153.

I have confidence in non-violent struggle because I think it is the best expression of the two most important values-- love and truth. Love as the supreme value can lead, I think, to sentimentality; in our identification with others we can so easily go beyond understanding wrong behavior to excusing it. But truth as the dominating value can lead to ruthlessness; when we focus on correctness we may let facts, principles, and logic dehumanize the subject of our interest.

Philosophically, non-violence is what happens when love and truth are equal to, and in tension with, each other.<sup>34</sup>

One more dimension which Gandhi introduces in his concept of non-violence and love, is the dimension of man's finitude and his need to have faith in God. Man on his own strength cannot practice non-violence, in its full sense. Thus Gandhi shows the need of dependence. This is another attempt on the part of Gandhi to save man from pride and infuse in him a sense of humility. Gandhi says:

The fact is that Satyagraha presupposes the living presence and guidance of God. The leader depends not on his own strength but on that of God. He acts as the Voice within guides him.<sup>35</sup>

Gandhi says, "In the long run non-violence can not work in those who have not a living faith in the God of love."<sup>36</sup>

This statement clearly shows that the source of non-violence, for Gandhi, did not arise from one's own being but from God himself. God, for Gandhi, resides in man. He is not outside to be searched. He is within and therefore, any search must begin from within.

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<sup>34</sup> G. Lahey, *Strategy for a Living Revolution* (New York: Crossman, 1973), p. 213.

<sup>35</sup> Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 216.

<sup>36</sup> *Harijan*, September 5, 1936, cited by P. Regamey, *Non-Violence and the Christian Conscience* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 197.

However, man cannot claim himself as the source of this love of which Gandhi speaks.

*It is impossible to have a living faith in non-violence without a living faith in God. No man can practice non-violence without the power of God's grace. Unless he has it he cannot have courage to die without anguish, fear, revenge. And this comes from the belief that God is in every man's heart and that one should have no fear in God's presence. To know the omnipresence of God inspires man with reverence for life, even the life of those we call our enemies.*<sup>37</sup>

Thus, we come to a conclusion that Gandhi's method of *satyagraha* is a powerful method to deal with human relation in an authentic way. In any encounter, between two people, it is the love which binds them in mutual growth. But when love is absent, violence comes to the surface, and division becomes the mode of existence. Instead of mutuality and creative tension, there is strife and division. Man becomes violent to others, as well as to himself and in the process becomes less than man, in Gandhi's term to become a "brute." Gandhi realized the limitations of human nature and therefore he was of opinion that non-violence cannot be practiced in its fullness.

Ahimsa really means that you may not offend anybody, you may not harbour an uncharitable thought even in connection with one who may consider to be your enemy. . . . If we resent a friend's action or the so-called enemy's action, we still fall short of this doctrine. . . . If we harbour even this thought, we depart from this doctrine of ahimsa. Those who join the Ashram have to literally accept that meaning. That does not mean that we practice that doctrine in its entirety. Far from it. It is an ideal which we have to reach, and it is an ideal to be reached even at this very moment, if we are capable of doing so.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>*Harijan*, June 18, 1938, cited by Regamey, *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>38</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XIII, 228.

This statement of Gandhi reflects Gandhi's understanding of human nature and its limitations. However, it also reflects Gandhi's own perseverance in following the doctrine of non-violence, with the recognition that the ideal must always be kept in front.

On the whole, we agree with Gandhi's concept of non-violence. It comes very close to the Christian concept of love of God (Agape). Certainly, it has the quality of sacrifice and outreach but is not completely free from a concern for personal welfare. However, his concept is a corrective to the sentimental attitude of many Christians to the concept of love. Gandhi has demonstrated that it is possible to love one's enemies without submitting passively to his injustices.

*Self-suffering.* Gandhi writes, "Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering."<sup>39</sup>

Self-suffering is the third element, constituting the method of *satyagraha*. It is not merely a matter of not violating the essence of another person by not acting in a harmful way towards other person, but it is an active method in which the person accepts, voluntarily and consciously, suffering on one's own being. This suffering might come from another person, or the person may voluntarily choose or impose suffering on his own, with the purpose of self-purification and with the aim of touching the heart of those against whom *satyagraha* is being used. Self-suffering for Gandhi, does not originate out of weakness or due to a lack of any other method. However, it arises

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<sup>39</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 134.

because of the very nature of truth. The quest after truth involves suffering which keeps the person on the right path and protects him from any selfish motivation. Gandhi says:

For the quest of Truth involves *tapas*--self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long.<sup>40</sup>

Gandhi's concept of *tapas* or self-suffering was different from its traditional understanding. Self-suffering is undertaken not for its own sake. In the case of Gandhi's *satyagraha*, it is taken for the sake of others, in the spirit of truth and love. It is not taken in the spirit of hatred and revenge.

Self-suffering is the sacrifice offered for the well-being of those against whom *satyagraha* is aimed. There is no element of cowardice or any element which may arise out of weakness. In fact the power of sacrifice increases with the innocence and purity of the motives of the person. Gandhi writes, "The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress. Hence did the sacrifice of Jesus suffice to free a sorrowing world."<sup>41</sup>

Gandhi illustrated the meaning of self-suffering, and its place in the schema of his *satyagraha*, by distinguishing it from passive-resistance.

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<sup>40</sup>Extract from Gandhi, *From Yeravada Mindir*, cited in his *Selected Writings*, p. 42.

<sup>41</sup>*Young India*, Vol. II, cited in Gandhi, *Selected Writings*, p. 134.



Passive resistance may be offered side by side with the use of arms. Satyagraha and brute force, being each a negation of the other can never go together. In passive resistance there is always present an idea of harassing the other party and there is a simultaneous readiness to undergo any hardships entailed upon us by such activity; while in satyagraha there is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent. Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person.<sup>42</sup>

For Gandhi, anyone harbouring hatred in his heart, in any form, cannot become a follower of non-violence. Such a person is called a hypocrite.<sup>43</sup>

Gandhi often points out that fear has no place in his method of *satyagraha*. Fear is replaced by courage which enables the person to remain firm in his quest for truth. It is only when a person has courage that he is able to accept voluntary suffering. Freedom is the quality of a *satyagrahi*. Gandhi writes:

The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. . . . He who has not overcome all fear cannot practice *ahimsa* to perfection.<sup>44</sup>

There can be no self-suffering in the presence of fear. Self-suffering produces power which has a healing influence on others. Gandhi believed that self-suffering had an effect of purification, making it possible for the person, to examine himself and make a decision according to his own truth. One of the forms of self-suffering, which Gandhi often imposed upon himself, was fasting. As such he disapproved of any fast which had the effect of coercion.

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<sup>42</sup>Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 179.

<sup>43</sup>*Harijan*, July 20, 1935, as cited by Chandrer, pp. 417-418.

<sup>44</sup>*Harijan*, September 1, 1940, as cited by Chandrer, p. 422.

However, he held his view that there is a definite influence of fasting (suffering) on other people. Gandhi writes:

The fact is that all spiritual fasts always influence those who come within the zone of their influence. That is why spiritual fasting is described as *Tapas*. And all *tapas* invariably exerts purifying influence on those in whose behalf it is undertaken.<sup>45</sup>

Thus suffering is an integral part of his method of *satyagraha* in melting the hearts of people. Its power raises the person from his brute state. He becomes a person and, as such, responds with his human qualities.

Gandhi's emphasis on the power of suffering, in bringing change in one's opponent, has elements which are present in the Christian faith. It is for this reason that Gandhi was attracted to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.<sup>46</sup> Seifert writes:

The power of suffering is a prominent theme in Christian tradition. Our concept of atonement relates the suffering of God to the redemption of men. Without pretending to go into the full nature and meaning of God's saving action, we can say that suffering love is God's strategy for dealing with evil. Only through the cross can men be redeemed without destroying their freedom.<sup>47</sup>

In a talk, given to a group of Christians on Christmas Day, Gandhi said, "We dare not think of birth without death on the cross. Living Christ means a living cross, without it life is a living death."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 319.

<sup>46</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *The Law of Love* (Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1963), p. 68.

<sup>47</sup>H. Seifert, *Conquest by Suffering* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 71.

<sup>48</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *What Jesus Means to Me* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan

Gandhi indeed considered that the suffering of Jesus Christ appeals, not only to the Christians but to all who come under its influence. The suffering of Jesus Christ, for Gandhi, had the power to change the hearts of man. He said, "The Cross undoubtedly makes a universal appeal the moment you give it a universal meaning in place of the narrow one that is often heard at ordinary meetings."<sup>49</sup>

There is no denying of the fact that the suffering of Jesus Christ, had a powerful effect on Gandhi and his method. James W. Douglas writes:

Though Gandhi could not claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering was at the essence of his faith in non-violence and ruled all his actions. For him the suffering of Jesus so defined the law of love that love and suffering were seen as one in a single flame of life. And it is thus, in terms of suffering servanthood, that Jesus defined his own vocation on earth and the vocation of any man who would travel his way.<sup>50</sup>

Gandhi's self-suffering was not intended for any general change in the heart of his opponent. It was not a technique, just to deter him from his "brute" action. Gandhi, through his self-suffering, was trying to help the person to recognize in him a human soul and thus to recognize the common humanity, the brotherhood of all men.

In a way, it was a mini-salvation for the opponent. James Douglas has put it very well:

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Publishing House, 1959), p. 16.

<sup>49</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *The Message of Jesus Christ* (Delhi: Bharitya Vidya Bhavan, 1963), pp. 22-23.

<sup>50</sup>J. W. Douglas, *The Non-violent Cross* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 64-65.

Non-violent resistance seeks to persuade the aggressor to recognize in his victim the humanity they have in common, which when recognized fully makes violence impossible. This goal of human recognition is sought through the power of voluntary suffering, by which the victim becomes no longer a victim but instead an active opponent in loving resistance to the man who has refused to recognize him as man. The man of non-violence acts through suffering love to move the unjust opponent to a perception of their common humanity, and thus to the cessation of violence in the commencement of brotherhood.<sup>51</sup>

After the independence of India in 1947, with the partition of India into Pakistan and India, the two nations went into an orgy of violence. Gandhi was seventy-eight years old. He went to Calcutta "into a Moslem house in an area where the stones were slippery with fresh blood and the air acrid with the smoke of burning homes," and there Gandhi undertook a fast unto death.<sup>52</sup>

Amiya Chakaravaty has described the effects of this fast:<sup>53</sup>

To most Indians, as to people outside, Gandhi's decision to fast as a means of changing an acute situation of social or political impasse, seemed remote, irrelevant and based on individual habit and unreason. And yet the challenge was clear; right in the heart of a brutal communal upheaval in Calcutta, resting in a broken house exposed to streets where fighting was going on, Gandhiji had chosen to impose self-suffering and penance upon his aged body, as well as on his mind, which he put to the test of fire. Everyone knew that within a day or two the sheer physical agony mounted to an hourly and momentarily torture which nothing could relieve; the toxic process and tissue destruction would begin, not only bringing death nearer but setting up an intolerable psychophysical sequence. . . . Even while repudiating his method

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>52</sup> Fisher, p. 472.

<sup>53</sup> A. Chakaravaty, *A Saint at Work: A View of Gandhi's Work and Message* (Young Friends Movement of the Philadelphia yearly meetings, 1950), pp. 23, cited by Douglas, pp. 73-75.

and its efficacy, the one question in people's minds would be, 'How is Gandhiji?' People would begin to feel uncomfortable; the grocer's boy, the rickshaw-puller, the office clerk, the school and college students would scan the news column early in the morning and listen to the radio throughout the day and feel more and more personally *involved* in the situation. I remember how university students would come. . . . They would say that though they did not believe in such methods and in the philosophy behind it all, one thing struck them as curious; after all, if anybody had to suffer for the continued killing and betrayal in the city, it was not Gandhiji. He had taken no part in it. So, while others were engaged in crime, it was he who had to suffer like this. They felt awkward and some wanted to stop his suffering, and even gathered together weapons from streets and homes at personal risk; they wanted to return them to Gandhiji.

Chakaravaty goes on to describe the effect of Gandhi's fast on a vast scale:

So the fast would continue. Men would come back from their offices in the evening and find food prepared by their family, ready for them; but soon it will be revealed that the women of the home had not eaten during the whole day. They had not felt hungry. Pressed further, the wife or mother would admit that she could not understand how they could go on when Gandhiji was dying for their crimes. Restaurants and amusement centers did little business; some of them voluntarily closed by their proprietors. Why this total and pervasive suffering for a whole city? Why did it all begin to matter? The nerve of feeling had been restored, the pain began to be felt; the pain of the whole society, because of the pain of its members, whether Hindu, Muslim or others. Gandhiji knew when to start the redemptive process. Involvement did not merely mean pain; it was fundamentally the joy of union, and the acceptance of new responsibility which such glad assurance of united strength makes possible. An immense release filled the atmosphere when Gandhiji declared that now we had all suffered and shared; his fast would be broken. Release turned into rejoicing, the fast actually led up to feast in which the warring communities joined heartily, while Gandhiji sipped his small glass of orange juice.

In conclusion, we agree with Gandhi that self-suffering has the power to bring change in one's opponent. However, a genuine success depends also on the character of one's opponent. The possibility of success of this method are much higher, when the opponent

has some intimate relationship with the *satyagrahi* rather than a complete stranger.

## CHAPTER IV

### SATYAGRAHA AS A METHOD OF PERSONAL CHANGE IN ONE'S OPPONENT

In this chapter the author intends to seek a further exploration of *satyagraha* as a method of personal change when applied to one's opponent. By "opponent" is meant any person whose attitude or action the *satyagrahi* wishes to change in order that the *satyagrahi's* conviction about freedom or justice or other desired goal may be realized. *Satyagraha* might be undertaken in an unjust cause, which was mistakenly considered to be just. Therefore, a thorough self-examination on the part of the *satyagrahi* is a prerequisite to undertake *satyagraha*. In this chapter, an attempt will be made to see how *satyagraha* brings change in one's opponent.

#### To Make an Appeal to the Opponent's Reason and Conscience

Gandhi believed that the opponent can be changed from the path of violence, injustice and untruth by touching his reason and conscience. He believed that any forced attempt to reform any man is bound to create a process of dehumanization. Gandhi considered any act immoral if it was done out of fear.<sup>1</sup>

According to Gandhi, there should not be any kind of violence

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<sup>1</sup>N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), p. 254.

to a person's sacredness. A man must be free to make his own decision. A person must possess his own truth as he perceives it. If a person gives up his own truth because of fear or under pressure, then such a man does violence to his own personality.

Gandhi's *satyagraha* is based on the assumption that the faculty of reason is present in all men, no matter how dehumanized they might have become. He assumed that man has the ability to use his reason to direct his action and his behaviour. Joan V. Bondurant writes:

The inference . . . is that Gandhian satyagraha assumes the rationality of man. This is not to say that satyagraha denies large areas of non-rationality in human motivation and behaviour. It requires simply the assumption that man is endowed with reason, that man can utilize reason to direct his actions, and that a technique for conducting conflict can appeal to the rational in man.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi used *satyagraha* as a method to help his opponents to be able to make a full use of their faculty of reason in making a conscious and voluntary decision, to turn away from their original path and seek a better one. Gandhi approached reason of his opponent with full respect and dignity. However, he would try his best to be honest and express his position with the utmost firmness. Gandhi believed that man must be given full freedom to think for himself and to decide the best course of action as he sees fit.

The opponent may decide upon a course of action which may be new to both, the opponent as well as the *satyagrahi*. This is very well illustrated in his talk with an atheist:

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<sup>2</sup>J. V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 194.



Yes, I see an ideal in your talk. I can neither say my theism is right nor your atheism wrong. We are seekers after truth. We change whenever we find ourselves in the wrong. I changed like that many times in my life. I see you are a worker. You are not a fanatic. You will change whenever you find yourself in the wrong. . . . Whether you are in the right or I am in the right, results will prove. Then I may go your way or you may come my way; or both of us may go a third way.<sup>3</sup>

Later this man as a matter of fact did become a follower of Gandhi and joined his *Ashram*. He also wrote a book, from which the above quotation has been taken. We see that Gandhi had a genuine respect for this man. Gandhi made no attempt to belittle him for his atheism. He was treated with the same respect given any other person. In fact, Gandhi made him feel that he had the possibility of initiating a change in his own perception. Gandhi was able to see a possibility in this man. To see positive aspects of one's personality is to respect one's being.

Gandhi believed that in order to make an appeal to one's reason, he must be given every opportunity to think freely. The opponent must be in full control of his faculty of reason. The opponent cannot use his reason under unfavorable conditions. He will become defensive and close all doors for any communication.

As such, Gandhi's *satyagraha* requires that all the channels of communication be kept open. The purpose of keeping the channels open was to eliminate any barrier which might arise as a result of misunderstanding.

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<sup>3</sup>Gora (G. Ramachandra Rao), *An Atheist with Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1951), p. 31.

Gandhi believed that one must be honest in his communication with his opponent. This honesty required that one must enter into communication in the spirit of truth and love. Any element of hatred, fear or resentment, is bound to affect the quality of communication. As such, there was nothing hidden from the opponent. There was no deception, no secrecy, to surprise the opponent. If there was any surprise, it was the surprise of his own insight. Gandhi asked his *satyagrahi* to reveal all plans in advance to the opponent, thus giving him freedom to reflect and make a right decision.

The opponent was trusted. How can you fully communicate to anyone if you do not trust him? Lack of trust has the seeds of fear and the tendency to hide. Under such conditions, communication becomes violent in its nature. Gandhi wanted a *satyagrahi* to engage in a pure and true communication, free from any deception. Communication also involves an empathic understanding of one's opponent. Gandhi says:

I am considering their condition of mind from their point of view and not my own. . . . And immediately we begin to think of things as our opponents think of them, we shall be able to do them full justice. I know that this requires a detached state of mind, and it is a state very difficult to reach. Nevertheless for a Satyagrahi it is absolutely essential. Three-fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in this world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably.<sup>4</sup>

If a *satyagrahi* found out that his opponent is going through some difficulty, he will change the mode of his communication. He will

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<sup>4</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, (New York: Schocken, 1972), pp. 193-194.

become concerned with his problem and try to help him to overcome his difficulties. A *satyagrahi* must give equal opportunity to his opponent so that he may be fully ready to communicate. One cannot communicate with a person who is under pressure and whose mind is set on something else. A *satyagrahi* gives full attention to his opponent so that the encounter, between them, be intense and full.

Gandhi recognized the significance and the instrumentality of reason in the process of change but he refused to make reason as the sole instrument of change by its own power. According to Gandhi, reason by itself has no power to effect change in the right direction. In fact, it may be corrupted and lead to harmful consequences. As such, reason must be sanctified. It should not take the place of God. Gandhi was not an eccentric who worshipped reason. He knew that reason can be used if it is sanctified. Gandhi says, "I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason."<sup>5</sup>

Gandhi's understanding is very much similar to Tillich's understanding of reason. Tillich writes:

Actual reason needs salvation, as do all the other sides of man's nature and of reality generally. Reason is not excluded from the healing power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ.<sup>6</sup>

With all the importance given to reason, Gandhi did not depend, for a genuine change, solely on reason. Reason, in itself, without

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<sup>5</sup>Bose, pp. 28-29.

<sup>6</sup>P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), I, 155.

the cooperation of heart, may not be sufficient for accomplishing fundamental change in one's opponent. As such there should be an integration between reason and heart. According to Gandhi change does not issue out of head only. Gandhi writes:

The conviction has been growing upon me that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering. . . . I have come to the fundamental conclusion that if you want something really important to be done you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens the inner understanding in men.<sup>7</sup>

Thus in the process of bringing change of fundamental importance in a person, his heart must be touched. And this could be done only through suffering and love. Thus, self-suffering becomes an instrument of penetration into the heart of man, to reach into the very recess of a person's being.

Gandhi's method of touching the hearts of men, through self-suffering, is based on his assumption that there is a basic goodness in man which can be evoked, if the outer shell is broken with the pathos of suffering. His emphasis on appealing to the person through self-suffering, is based on his assumption, that each person has a conscience and is an individual, free to make his own decisions.

Gandhi was too optimistic about the human nature, and somewhat naive about the social forces. Therefore *satyagraha* cannot be applied in all situations. *Satyagraha* works only in those situations where

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<sup>7</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1971), XLVII, 189.

there is already some basis of contact. It will not have any effect in the case of a psychopath who does not seem to have any guilt or shame.

Gandhi's success with the British people may lie in the fact that he was able to arouse their guilt. On the other hand his success with the Indians, as his opponents, may lie in the fact that he was able to evoke only shame and not guilt. If he was able to evoke guilt in the Indian people, it was on a much smaller level. The British are a guilt-conscious people, whereas the Indians are shame-conscious. Shame is connected with the community in which the person lives and feels that he has not been able to come up to the expectation of his society. He feels exposed in the presence of others. Guilt arises as a result of failure to live to one's own expectations and values.

Gandhi's success with the British and the Indian people is to be found in what he represented to them respectively. To the British, he represented the voice of their conscience while to most Indians, he was a holy man, the *Mahatma* (the great soul), evoking in them shame. Thus Gandhi was able to evoke both guilt and shame in people, depending upon their psychological make-up. Perhaps this was the reason that he was able to attract and influence people from all levels of society, ranging from the most rustic villager to the most sophisticated men and women of India.

In a culture like India, where individuality has been suppressed and where one's identity is determined by one's association, to one's caste, family and the village, people do not feel guilt.as

much as they feel shame. In a shame-oriented culture, people do not feel guilt for their acts against others, as long as they are not seen or caught by others. If they are caught, they feel shame and it is also painful. A person does not commit acts of violence because of fear of shame. But such a man is still governed by outside factors rather than from inside.

### To Convert the Opponent and Make Him One's Willing Ally and Friend

Gandhi said that his method of "Satyagraha is a process of conversion."<sup>8</sup> However, when he uses the word "conversion," he does not imply the connotation of "religious conversion." In fact, he was very much opposed to the idea of converting one person from his religion to a different religion.<sup>9</sup> According to Gandhi, a change from one religion to another is not essential for the growth of a person. He believed that all goodness lies in the person and therefore one must be helped to become aware of that good and live accordingly. However, Gandhi considered that the main aim of *satyagraha* is not the gain of an immediate objective, such as the resolution of a conflict, or freedom from the oppressor, but to convert the opponent and make him one's willing ally and friend. According to Gandhi, conversion does not mean an annihilation of a person's identity and adopting a different identity, but actualization of his latent potentialities. Gandhi

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<sup>8</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 181.

<sup>9</sup>D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (Bombay: Jhaveri & Tendulkar, 1951), II, 450.

believed that man can never fully realize his ideal or his own potentialities. A person is always in the process of changing and therefore conversion is a life-long task.

Thus, Gandhi does not advocate the destruction of a person in order to construct a new person out of him. In dealing with the problem of the "landlord system," in India, Gandhi did not advocate the destruction of landlords but advocated their conversion. It was his belief that unless man is converted in his heart, any external change will not resolve the problem of human relationships. As such, Gandhi declared:

What is needed is not the extinction of the landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationships between them and masses into something healthier and purer.<sup>10</sup>

According to Gandhi, exploitation is based on the mutual cooperation between the exploiter and the exploited. He said, "All exploitation is based on cooperation, willing or forced, of the exploited."<sup>11</sup> We recognize that the exploiter cannot exploit unless the exploited cooperates in the exploitation. Here, Gandhi overlooks power factors which are present in some situations. There are situations in which a person is exploited even though he does not cooperate with the exploiter. Sometimes he does not even know who his exploiter is. But there are situations in which the exploiter is able to exploit others because of lack of knowledge on the part of the exploited. Men have the power to refuse to cooperate with others when they become

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<sup>10</sup>Bose, p. 91.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

victims of manipulation and exploitation. Gandhi says:

Exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires, but by removing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to non-cooperate with their exploiters also. I have even suggested that ultimately it will lead to both being equal partners.<sup>12</sup>

Gandhi was not satisfied with a temporary solution, which could be brought about through violence, but he wanted to initiate a healthy change.

Conversion for Gandhi is not a submission to the will of another. It is not an ordinary act. There is nothing passive about it. He does not want to convert a person against his will. He wants his opponent to reflect upon the problem with openness and in a spirit of active encounter. It must always be an active choice. That is, under the circumstances, a choice based upon his perception of his own truth. Thus Gandhi makes it clear by saying:

I do not want anybody to give up his convictions or to suppress himself. I do not believe that a healthy and honest difference of opinions will injure our cause. . . . If you must dissent, you should take care that your opinions voice your innermost convictions and not intended merely as a convenient party cry.<sup>13</sup>

Thus conversion is a process whereby the opponent is able to express his inner convictions as well as to actualize them.

The method of *satyagraha* creates an environment or a situation where the opponent feels free to trust his own inner being and courage to exist as an authentic human being. Erikson, understands this dimension in Gandhi's method of *satyagraha*. Erikson reflects upon

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<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 190.



the "event" (when Gandhi offered his *satyagraha*, on behalf of the mill workers, against the mill owner) and writes:

The mood of the Event was, above all, pervaded by a spirit of *giving the opponent the courage to change* even as the challenger remained ready to change with the events. At such periods of his life Gandhi possessed a Franciscan gaiety and a capacity to reduce situations to their bare essentials, thus helping others both to discard costly defenses and denials and to realize hidden potentials of good will and energetic deed.<sup>14</sup>

Gandhi was of the opinion that each person wants to grow and to become himself. However, for the sake of his own security, he sells himself and depends upon others for his well-being. Gandhi feels that as long as man lives depending upon others for his self-respect and dignity, he will continue to be trapped, exploited. As such, Gandhi encouraged his opponents to become individuals, to decide for themselves on the basis of their inner voice. The method of *satyagraha* encourages people to discover their own truth. Gandhi says:

Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there, and to be guided by truth as one sees it. But no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth.<sup>15</sup>

Becoming onself is very important for Gandhi. He wanted his opponent to become himself. He wanted to convert his opponent to the idea of a fundamental unity of all people. As such he was interested in an inclusive identity<sup>16</sup> rather than an exclusive identity.

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<sup>14</sup>E. H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 435.

<sup>15</sup>R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao (comps.) *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), pp. 19-20.

<sup>16</sup>Erikson, p. 433.

According to Gandhi, the awareness of unity binds people rather than divides. Therefore he was interested in helping his opponents to develop their own unique identities which would lead them to affiliation and reconciliation. Any identity which leads to alienation and estrangement from one's neighbour was to be considered as an exclusive identity.

Gandhi opposed all forms of alienation and encouraged every possible means to bring people together. Thus *satyagraha*, as a method of change, converts people to join a universal family of brotherhood. Gandhi says:

When men and women have gone a stage further, they would extend the law of love, i.e., *satyagraha*, from the family to the village. A still further stage away from the brute life is reached when the law of *satyagraha* is applied to provincial life, and the people inhabiting a province regulate their relations by love rather than hatred. And when as in Hindustan we recognize the law of *satyagraha* as a binding force even between province and province and the millions of Hindustan treat one another as brothers and sisters, we have advanced a stage further still from the brute nature.<sup>17</sup>

According to Gandhi if one is converted from his 'brute' nature to his human nature, he has become an ally. Such a person will manifest his human nature in all situations. He is not expected to follow Gandhi or his movement. He is free to act and behave like a free man.

The encounter between a *satyagrahi* and his opponent does not end on an impersonal note. The encounter never ends, it only advances to a different level. It is a level where both become friends. Of

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<sup>17</sup> Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XV, 249.

course, the *satyagrahi* always considers his opponent as a friend but now the opponent begins to regard the *satyagrahi* as a friend.

The idea of converting one's opponent and making him one's ally is very well illustrated in the confrontation between Gandhi and General Smuts of South Africa.<sup>18</sup> According to Gandhi in 1906, General Smuts, "was the most relentless opponent of Indian aspiration." But, "In 1914, he took pride in doing tardy justice by removing from the Statute Book of the Union a disgraceful measure which, in 1909 he had told Lord Morley, would be never removed. . . ."<sup>19</sup>

The mystery of *satyagraha* does not lie in the mere conversion of a person from his original path but in the friendship which emerges between the *satyagrahi* and the opponent. And this is what happened between Gandhi and General Smuts. Louis Fisher records this beautiful encounter between Gandhi and General Smuts. Fisher writes:

Having won the battle, Gandhi, accompanied by Mrs. Gandhi, left South Africa forever on July 18, 1914. Both were forty-five. Just before sailing Gandhi sent General Smuts a gift--a pair of sandals Gandhi had made in prison. Smuts wore them every summer at his own farm near Pretoria, and returned them to Gandhi as a gesture of friendship on Gandhi's seventieth birthday, in 1939. Speaking of Gandhi's present, Smuts remarked, 'I have worn these sandals for many a summer . . . even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man. It was my fate to be the antagonist of a man for whom even then I had the highest respect. . . . He never forgot the human background of the situation, never lost his temper or succumbed to hate, and preserved his gentle humor even in the most trying situations.

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<sup>18</sup>General Smuts was the Minister of Finance and Defence of South Africa.

<sup>19</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 110.

His manner and spirit even then, as well as later, contrasted markedly with the ruthless and brutal forcefulness which is the vogue in our day. . . .'<sup>20</sup>

This illustration gives us insight into Gandhi's method of *satyagraha*. If this method is carried out in the spirit of truth and love, the opponent is not only converted but is made an ally and a friend. We can see how General Smuts became a friend and also a proponent of Gandhi's non-violent approach to human problems. One thing which General Smuts never forgot was the human dimension, which he called "human background," in Gandhi's method.

Gandhi's method of *satyagraha* always keeps the human dimension in the foreground. Men and women never become objects, they always remain human beings.

#### To Bring out the Best in Both, the Satyagrahi and the Opponent

Gandhi's *satyagraha* is based on the assumption that each person is capable of making a creative response to any situation.<sup>21</sup> As such, a *satyagrahi* treats his opponent as a person with unlimited possibilities. The opponent is not considered as an obstacle in one's path--something to be removed or annihilated. The opponent is not considered as an object but as a person, just like the *satyagrahi* himself. On the other hand, the opponent is given the full dignity and respect which must be given to any human being.

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<sup>20</sup>L. Fisher, *The Essential Gandhi* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 110.

<sup>21</sup>Tendulkar, IV, 15.

The *satyagrahi* considers his opponent as someone who has the capacity to make a creative contribution to the conflict in which both are involved. *Satyagraha*, becomes a dialogue, a joint venture in which both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent work together in the spirit of cooperation. Each person is allowed to affirm and hold on to his truth. But both are willing to learn from each other. It is a creative encounter in the midst of conflict, between human beings. Both approach their common problem from their own perspectives. Horsburgh writes:

The Gandhian attitude to conflict is very different. The *satyagrahi* holds fast to his demands while he believes them to be just. But their justice is not taken for granted or held to have been established. He remains open to persuasion from his opponent, and can even be said to appeal to him to confirm the moral acceptability of what the *satyagrahi* demands. Thus, the struggle between the Gandhian believer in non-violence and his opponent proceeds at two levels: That on which the *satyagrahi* tries to persuade his opponents of justice of the ends which he has adopted, and that on which he tries to induce his opponents to enter into a fundamentally cooperative relationship through which the truth about relevant needs is to be uncovered and just settlement agreed between them.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from resolving a conflict in a non-violent way, both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent bring to their respective consciousness, their hidden potentialities. That is, they begin to make use of their positive aspects of their personalities, not only with respect to each other, but with all relationships. As such, there is growth in their relationships with other human beings.

Both make contributions to each other's personalities. It is

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<sup>22</sup>H. J. N. Horsburgh, "The Distinctiveness of Satyagraha," *Philosophy East and West*, XIX:2 (April 1969), 173.

not a one-way approach, but an interaction in which the creative forces flow in both directions, giving strength to both. This principle of mutuality is applicable in all situations and in all encounters. There is none which is excluded from the possibility of making contribution to another. Gandhi considered that even babies have something positive to offer to others in any encounter. Gandhi writes, "For myself, I am gifted with enough humility to look even to babes and sucklings for help."<sup>23</sup>

People begin to make contributions to each other in the process of being recognized as authentic human beings. The *satyagrahi* through his authentic existence evokes a response of authenticity in the opponent. And as the opponent becomes more and more authentic, the *satyagrahi* also grows towards higher and higher mode of authentic existence.

As they experience each other's authentic existence, they experience the joy of being human. They begin to feel a sense of true freedom to love each other without any ultimate motive. Love becomes an integral part of their human nature. The other person becomes a living reality rather than a mere object.

When men open themselves to each other in the spirit of truth and love, healing takes place in all dimensions. Growth takes place only when men discover each other's humanity, in its fullness. When men are able to look upon each other's qualities, whether positive or

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<sup>23</sup>Prabhu and Rao, p. 5.

negative, and still maintain a mutual respect for each other, growth takes place on both sides. But as soon as one makes himself superior to another, growth is jeopardized. Gandhi says, "A saint who considers himself superior to a sinner forfeits his sainthood and becomes worse than the sinner, who unlike the proud saint, knows not what he is doing."<sup>24</sup>

Thus, *satyagraha*, for Gandhi, is a method which encourages people to enter into encounter with each other on an authentic level. Carl Rogers recognizes that growth takes place when people are authentic to each other. Carl Rogers writes:

. . . that as the individual becomes more open to, more aware of, all aspects of his experience, he is increasingly likely to act in a manner we would term socialized. If he can be aware of his hostile impulses, but also of his desire for friendship and acceptance; aware of the expectations of his culture, but equally aware of his own purposes; aware of his selfish desires, but also aware of his tender and sensitive concern for another; then he behaves in a fashion which is harmonious, integrated, constructive. The more he is open to his experience, the more his behavior makes it evident that the nature of the human species tends in the direction of constructively social living.<sup>25</sup>

As people experience authenticity in each other they begin to trust themselves. Mistrust of each other begins to disappear and mutual trust begins to envelop their relationship. Erikson perceives this truth in Gandhi's *satyagraha*. He writes:

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>25</sup>C. R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 353.

Gandhi's way, as we have seen, is that of a double conversion; the hateful person, by containing his egoistic hate and by learning to love the opponent, will confront the opponent with an enveloping technique that will force, or rather permit, him to regain his latent capacity to trust and to love.<sup>26</sup>

Gandhi believed that there is a basic goodness present in each person. All people basically are good in their nature. On the basis of this assumption, Gandhi advances with full confidence the idea that man's higher nature will overcome his lower nature. As such, the task of a *satyagrahi* is to develop this human nature in his own self and then be ready to help others to do the same. Gandhi mentions:

. . . a satyagrahi never desires to reach the goal by harbouring or increasing ill will or hatred against his opponent. He will look upon him even as a friend and yet ever resist the wrong done by him without bearing malice towards him. By such conduct worthy of a satyagrahi, causes conducing to enmity will decrease and both parties will acknowledge and avoid mistakes.<sup>27</sup>

The *satyagrahi* creates an atmosphere, through his actions and direct contact, in which the forces of division are reduced and the forces of cooperation increased. When the forces of cooperation are increased, both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent, feel at ease to make adequate response to each other. According to Gandhi it is the task of the *satyagrahi* to make his opponent at ease before confronting him. When they are at ease with each other, they do not feel any compulsion to make any response. They make their response to each other out of love and good will. Horsburgh writes:

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<sup>26</sup>Erikson, p. 437.

<sup>27</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XV, 267.



But their capacity to fill this creative role is dependent upon a fundamental change in the relation of the parties to the conflict, the change that will make cooperation rather than conflict the basic mode in their relations. Such a change is bound to occur if the parties to the conflict come to view one another with mutual goodwill.<sup>28</sup>

Thus it is quite clear and evident that Gandhi's *satyagraha* is a method which creates a situation in which creative forces are released in both *satyagrahi* and the opponent. If growth does not take place in the opponent, *satyagraha*, as a method, has failed to that extent. Gandhi was very much interested to see that his opponents, against whom he undertook his *satyagraha*, benefitted as much as himself. He wanted them to mobilize their latent spiritual potentialities to obtain their objectives.

Erikson writes about the effects of *satyagraha* on both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent.

At the end only a development which transforms both partners in such an encounter is truth in action; and such transformation is possible only where man learns to be nonviolent toward himself as well as toward others. Finally, the truth of Satyagraha and the 'reality' of psychoanalysis come somewhat nearer to each other if it is assumed that man's 'reality testing' includes an attempt not only to think clearly but also to enter into an optimum of mutual activation with others. But this calls for a combination of clear insight into our central motivation and pervasive faith in the brotherhood of man.<sup>29</sup>

This mutual activation, as Erikson calls it, is indeed a quality of Gandhi's method of *satyagraha*. Thus what happens in any encounter between any two human beings is dependent upon their mutual interaction. This mutual interaction is determined by a perception of

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<sup>28</sup>Horsburgh, p. 179.

<sup>29</sup>Erikson, p. 439.

truth in each person. When men begin to judge others on the basis of their relative truth, they become violent to each other. Their interaction is dominated by a spirit to overcome the truth in another. As such Gandhi warns that no absolute judgment can be pronounced against another person. Gandhi writes:

In dealing with living entities, the dry syllogistic method leads not only to bad logic but sometimes to fatal logic. For if you miss even a tiny factor--and you never have control over all the factors that enter into dealings with human beings--your conclusion is likely to be wrong. Therefore, you never reach the final truth, you only reach an approximation and that too if you are extra careful in your dealings.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the *satyagrahi* is very careful in making any judgment against his opponent. In fact, he is expected to examine his own self before making any judgment.

If a *satyagrahi* has not purified himself, that is, examined his inner motives, he will not be able to enter into an authentic dialogue with his opponent. In such a case, instead of stimulating the positive side of the opponent, he will contribute to the stimulation of the negative side. The consequences of such an encounter will initiate a process of destructive relationship. Gandhi was aware that what happens between two people, ultimately has far-reaching influence in the community. Therefore, he insisted that those who would claim to be a *satyagrahi* will examine themselves in a prayerful attitude. He says:

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<sup>30</sup>Bose, p. 45.

Therefore a person who claims to be a Satyagrahi always tries by close and prayerful self-introspection and self-analysis to find out whether he is himself completely free from the taint of anger, ill-will and such other human infirmities, whether he is not himself capable of those very evils against which he is out to lead a crusade.<sup>31</sup>

### To Encourage the Opponent to Join in a Common Quest for Truth

Gandhi used his method of *satyagraha* not just to resolve the conflict in a non-violent way but also to enlist his opponent in a mutual dialogue for the sake of common quest after truth. The conflict, which previously separated the *satyagrahi* from the opponent, is resolved in such a way that both the opponent and the *satyagrahi* find themselves involved in a purposive and meaningful dialogue. The spirit of monologue is discouraged because it has the nature of violence. Monologue has no place in the thought of Gandhi because it does not respect the dignity of another person. There is no interaction on an honest level. It is limited, and it limits not only the freedom of the opponent but also the possibilities of solution. V. V. Ramana Murti writes:

It was the uniqueness of Gandhi's *satyagraha* that it tried to transform a potential situation of conflict between two nations into a real dialogue. The way of violence works as a monologue, but the nature of non-violence is a dialogue. The resolution of a conflict by violence does not admit of any means of action but one. It rules out the very possibility of any other source of action. The method of violence is thus completely arbitrary.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 77.

<sup>32</sup> V. V. Ramana Murti, "Buber's Dialogue and Gandhi's Satyagraha," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXIX:4 (October-December 1968), 607-608.

Gandhi wanted to transform any situation of conflict into a creative dialogue which would result not only in a non-violent resolution but would have a lasting impact on the whole mankind. Therefore, the opponent was invited to join in a great responsible venture. The opponent was invited to actualize potentialities which he had but had never tested. Gandhi gave that opportunity to his opponent in the very situation which demanded a mutual resolution. Writing a letter to Lord Irwin on March 2, 1930, Gandhi proceeds:

. . . my ambition is no less than to convert the British people, through non-violence. . . . I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them, even as I want to serve my own . . . when . . . I conceived Non-cooperation, the object still was to serve them. . . . I respectfully invite you to pave the way for . . . a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship.<sup>33</sup>

Thus we see that both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent, are allowed to meet each other on a voluntary basis, to discover truth. Both discover in each other a common humanity and a sound basis for a quest after truth. The search after truth is not governed wholly by the *satyagrahi*. He becomes a pilgrim and makes the opponent feel the same. If, in their journey together, conflicts develop, and they are bound to develop, these conflicts become creative rather than disruptive. Each conflict becomes an opportunity to experiment in the non-violent approach in discovering the answers which help the growth of human nature in both.

A search after truth does not take them away from the

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<sup>33</sup>B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Padma, 1946), I, 375-376.

immediate situation to some abstract truth. But at the same time the search after truth is not limited to the immediate conflict. Both are in search of the universal truth which has significance in specific situations. Both work in a cooperative spirit and search for the truth which is relevant to human needs.

Horsburgh writes:

Thus, the struggle between the Gandhian believer in non-violence and his opponent proceeds at two levels; that on which the *satyagrahi* tries to persuade his opponents of the justice of the ends which he has adopted and that on which he tries to induce his opponents to enter into a fundamentally cooperative relationship with himself, a relationship through which the truth about relevant human needs is to be uncovered and a just settlement agreed between them.<sup>34</sup>

The *satyagrahi* and the opponent begin to see in each other the possibilities which might lead them to truth. They become aware of the forces that have been controlling their lives so far. The opponent, in particular, begins to recognize the possibilities of meaningful relationships, on an intimate level, with human beings who differ from him externally. This possibility of meaningful relationship with another and the confidence of arriving at a mutual agreement opens the eyes of the opponent to explore further all his relationships.

Thus we observe that *satyagraha* is not a crude method, employed to defeat the opponent but to win him as a friend. Gandhi introduces the human dimension in his method. He would not sacrifice this element in his quest after truth. Truth is distorted at the very moment, we disregard or ignore the human dimension. Therefore,

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<sup>34</sup>Horsburgh, p. 173.

according to Gandhi, conflicts must not be resolved only on the intellectual level but also on the depth level, the level where people meet each other as authentic human beings. If people are regarded as impersonal objects, satisfying each other's needs, then the search for truth is governed by egoistic motives. But when human beings are regarded as persons of infinite worth, and able to sacrifice and suffer for the sake of others, then the search for truth is governed by love. Thus when the opponent, in his quest after truth, perceives the truth of humanity, he begins to live and act by the eternal law of love. In fact, he may even be ready to join with the *satyagrahi* to suffer for the sake of others.

This joint venture brings to their awareness the significance of their respective individualities. And in the process, they begin to respect each other's uniqueness. This truth brings them to a realization that the ultimate truth cannot be explored apart from human beings. Gandhi writes: "If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave, I would proceed there immediately, but I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity."<sup>35</sup>

Thus there is no search after truth apart from people. Anyone who isolates himself from others, with the aim of searching truth on his own, without regard to other human beings, is likely to fall into the sin of pride. There is no doubt that the ultimate judge of a truth is the person himself,<sup>36</sup> but the quest is always corporate.

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<sup>35</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Truth is God* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1959), pp. 29-30.

<sup>36</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 29.

Human beings cannot claim complete independence from others. They are dependent on others for their existence in many ways.

Gandhi emphasized the need of others in the quest for truth. For him other people became a touchstone on which one can test one's truth. Gandhi says:

Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being. Without inter-relation with society he cannot realize his oneness with the universe or suppress his egotism. His social interdependence enables him to test his faith and to prove himself on the touchstone of reality. If man were so placed or could so place himself as to be absolutely above all dependence on his fellow-beings he would become so proud and arrogant as to be a veritable burden and nuisance to the world. . . .<sup>37</sup>

This quest after truth demands inclusion of everything. For Gandhi all human activities contained in them the possibilities of truth. He writes, "I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end."<sup>38</sup>

Thus the quest after truth becomes an integral part of the *satyagrahi*, and the opponent is invited to join with him in a common quest. There is no sacred or secular; everything becomes sacred, seeking a non-violent response. The opponent becomes a seeker after truth. His life is changed and he lives by his truth. He becomes an individual. He is not ruled by the passions of his body. He is able to master his emotions and use them creatively in the quest for truth.

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<sup>37</sup>Prabhu and Rao, p. 134.

<sup>38</sup>Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. xii.

When a *satyagrahi* is provoked by another's violence, he does not run away like a coward, nor does he attack in self-defense, like an animal. But he behaves like a human being in a non-violent way. As a free person he knows how to express his love towards those who attack him. He is neither sentimental nor coercive in his love towards others. Gandhi says, "One must know in a crucial situation when to speak and when to be silent, when to act and when to refrain. Action and non-action in these circumstances become identical instead of being contradictory."<sup>39</sup>

Each situation becomes an opportunity for an encounter with truth. Each man becomes sacred and personal and the truth begins to emerge on the faces of men and women of this world. The truth which emerges on the faces of people is not the ultimate truth but it leads in the direction of the absolute. Therefore, Gandhi spent his whole life searching for truth on the faces of men. And he discovered a glimpse of the absolute on the faces of men and women he encountered, including his opponents. He was seeking his salvation through his interaction with the people. James Douglas writes:

What Gandhi sought in his experiments was not simply his own salvation through a series of spiritual discoveries but an ever widening, communal growth in truth, the convergence finally of whole races and people in an upward ascent of mutual recognition. Whereas the effect of autonomous technique on man is fragmentization, the effect of growth in truth is unity, unity in the man of truth and unity in the community drawn upward.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>T. Pyare Lall, *Mahatma Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1956), I, 429-430.

<sup>40</sup>J. W. Douglas, *The Non-Violent Cross* (New York: Macmillan,



The ultimate goal towards which Gandhi wanted his method to lead people was a full self-realization as human beings. Gandhi says,

To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, i.e. to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all the strength I possess, because it is a rare thing for a man to know his own limitations.<sup>41</sup>

Any quest which does not lead to this truth has the seeds of violence, hatred and exploitation of other human beings. According to Gandhi the search after truth must lead one to become aware of one's potentialities, and this truth must be transformed into action. For Gandhi one must be able to put into action his own truth.

As long as men and women remain oblivious to their inner nature, they continue to live by the rules of their animal nature. Gandhi often calls this nature "brute." When men are controlled by their "brute nature," they are in search for objects which will gratify their bodily needs. Their search becomes violent and the process of search becomes degraded. It brings a state of degradation for all. Men begin to live by the law of violence. Falsehood replaces truth and men become brute. Gandhi's vision was to liberate man from all types of bondage. Unless man ventures in the quest of truth, he remains less than human. But once he has discovered the truth of his humanity, he is on his way to the ultimate truth.

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1968), p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> *A Reply to Rabindernath Tagore*, cited by M. K. Gandhi, *Selected Writings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 122.

This search for truth does not come to an end at any time, according to Gandhi, not even with the dissolution of the body.

In my pursuit after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop with the dissolution of the flesh. . . .<sup>42</sup>

Whether we accept or reject the Hindu theory of transmigration of souls, we cannot but agree with Gandhi that there is no point in one's life where one ceases to grow in truth. If men begin to claim that growth in truth comes to an end with the age, then man has lost the grandeur and mystery which are his lot. Thus the quest is unending because growth never ends.

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<sup>42</sup>*Harijan*, April 29, 1933, cited by Fisher, p. 313.

CHAPTER V

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SATYAGRAHA FOR AN  
INDIGENOUS MODEL OF PASTORAL COUNSELLING  
IN INDIA

In this chapter the author would like to explore the theoretical implications of *satyagraha* for the development of indigenized pastoral counselling in India. It is our purpose to seek these implications from a theological and psychosocial perspective.

Theological Implications of Satyagraha

Gandhi's method of *satyagraha* provides three important elements, truth, non-violence and self-suffering, which have significant theological implications for the development of pastoral counselling in India. These concepts are not totally new to the Christian faith. Rather they have deep roots in it. William Robert Miller writes:

Both as a form of conduct and as a strategy of action, non-violence is not only rooted in the history of the church--a striking fact in itself--but it stems from precisely those realities of human existence with which the Christian faith is vitally concerned.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it is a matter of exploration of these ideas in a new perspective. We shall explore these ideas and seek their implications for pastoral counselling in India.

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<sup>1</sup>W. R. Miller, *Non-Violence* (New York: Association Press, 1968), p. 17.

*Truth.* The first element of *satyagraha* is truth and therefore we shall study its implications. Bertrand Russell said, "The two qualities which I consider superlatively important are love of truth and love of our neighbour."<sup>2</sup> No one can claim to know the absolute truth and therefore one must be humble and open to the truth of other persons. This attitude requires that we develop a truth-centered theology. Any theology which is not truth-centered has the tendency of becoming sectarian. It becomes a closed system. Instead of overcoming isolation and alienation, it sows the seeds of dissension, conflict and division. A closed system creates further isolation and devises ways and means of manipulating another. Pastoral theology cannot proceed further on the basis of a closed system. If one feels that he has the absolute truth, he becomes proud and even fanatic.<sup>3</sup> And, when a person shows any sign of superiority over others, he creates alienation and helps in the establishment of the domonic. A pastoral counselor cannot approach his counsellee with any sense of superiority. In fact, when that happens, there is dominance of one over the other. There is no dialogue between them; rather the counsellee becomes a mere object to be manipulated and changed to one's own views of reality.

Since the pastoral counsellor works within the context of the Christian church, the problem of claiming knowledge and possessing the

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<sup>2</sup>B. Russell, "Obstacles to Free Thought," *Freeman*, V (1922), 272.

<sup>3</sup>P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), III, 245.

absolute truth has serious consequences. In India, we are guilty of claiming to know the absolute truth while ignoring the possibilities of truth in other religions. Therefore, the pastoral counsellor must be very careful as how he perceives himself in the context of his Christian faith, while practicing pastoral counselling. This problem appears in any counselling situation, irrespective of the religious background of the counsellee. The problem of truth is implicit in any encounter between two people. This sense of possession of the absolute truth creates serious conflicts and leads to violence and ultimately to a distortion of truth.

This problem of possession of the absolute truth must be faced realistically and cannot be ignored at any cost. A theologian must be open to the spirit of truth. Tillich writes:

But in so far as the divine Spirit conquers religion, it prevents the claim to absoluteness by both the churches and their members. Where the divine Spirit is effective, the claim of a church to represent God to the exclusion of all other churches is rejected.<sup>4</sup>

In a counselling situation, no matter what the problem may be, there is always a confrontation between two people and therefore between their respective truths. If the pastoral counsellor is not open to the truth of his counsellee, he cannot listen adequately and understand him, from his perspective. The problem becomes critical when the counsellee is discussing the question of the ultimate value. The pastoral counsellor cannot and should not escape from dealing

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<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, III, 244-245.

with his own truth. He is faced with his belief in God. The question is how does one deal with his own ultimate value? One has to be honest with his counsellor. And if he is not open to the truth of his counsellor, he cannot be authentic in his interaction with his counsellor. However, openness does not mean a lack of commitment but it means a genuine commitment to truth. S. J. Samartha writes, "Without this freedom to be committed, to be open, to witness, to change and be changed, genuine dialogue is impossible."<sup>5</sup>

Gandhi's *satyagraha* has this dimension. It was his commitment to the total truth that gave him freedom to be open to truth in all situations. James W. Douglas writes:

Unlike Christianity, which has allowed its belief to become fixed on a narrowing conception of God at the expense of its openness to truth, especially as found in its own Gospels, Gandhi felt in no way threatened by an absolute commitment to truth as it opened out to him. For Gandhi, God was 'up ahead' in the deeply living sense that his experiments in Truth were drawing him farther and farther into the mystery of a loving goal of life and history. God as Truth opened him to every aspect of man's search for dignity and meaning.<sup>6</sup>

According to Gandhi one cannot separate his belief in God from his understanding of truth. That is, one's concept of God is directly related to one's understanding of truth. If one has a narrow view of his God, he cannot be open to truth in other persons, belonging to different faiths. S. J. Samartha, an Indian theologian writes:

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<sup>5</sup>S. J. Samartha "Dialogue as a Continuing Christian Concern," *Religion and Society*, XVIII:1 (March 1971), 8.

<sup>6</sup>J. W. Douglas, *The Non-Violent Cross* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 37.

Since truth in biblical understanding is not propositional but relational and is to be sought not in isolation of lonely meditation but in living personal confrontation between God and man, and man and man, dialogue becomes one of the ways for the quest of truth. And because Christians cannot claim to have a monopoly of truth we need to meet men of other faiths and ideologies as part of our trust in and obedience to the promise of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

In the past, as Christians, we have shown a tendency to monopolize truth at the cost of alienation and serious misunderstanding. Instead of overcoming the demonic structures, we have unknowingly participated in their reinforcement. Now we must break down all the barriers which keep people alienated from each other. Nirmal Minz writes,

One of the crucial problems facing India is that of the relation between the various religious communities in the country. Dialogue among other things, is also a means to promote understanding and reconciliation.<sup>8</sup>

The only way we can create understanding and reconciliation is through a commitment to all truth. We cannot have dialogue or any genuine confrontation, unless we make this commitment.

Gandhi and the Catholic Philosopher Leslie Dewart corresponded with each other on the understanding of truth. Here Leslie Dewart writes:

Belief in the *true God* means not simply belief in a god which (logically enough), we must *presuppose* to be true, under pain of otherwise not being able to believe at all. It means belief in God precisely *as true*. It would not be inexact, therefore, to say that belief in God really means to have an ultimate commitment to the truth; I mean, to all truth,

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<sup>7</sup>Samartha, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup>Nirmal Minz, "Gandhiji and the Formal Hindu-Christian Dialogue," *Religion and Society*, XVI:3 (September 1969), 35.

totally and universally--not particularly to a transcendent, subsistent Truth, that is, not to the presumed Truth of God's self-identity, which is a hellenization of the Christian experience, but to the transcendent truth which is immanent and manifested in every truth. I am talking about the truth which evokes the attitudes of honesty and truthfulness--I mean, that precise sort of openness which is apt to earn self-respect. I refer to that truth which calls for fidelity to the truth wherever and whatever it might be.<sup>9</sup>

The barriers of hatred, misunderstanding and prejudice can be broken down if people enter into dialogue with each other, recognizing and respecting each other's truth. But there is no point in entering into dialogue with anyone if we are not willing to be affected and changed by each other's truth. If we enter into any dialogue as genuine human beings we cannot but be touched by each other's presence.

To be touched and affected by another's truth is not a weakness but a strength because by opening oneself to another, one is enlarging and expanding his consciousness and thereby his own truth. In doing so, there is a mutual growth on both sides. The following statement, from the consultation on the theology of Hindu-Christian dialogue, held at Bombay in 1969, is worth noting:

Dialogue, we repeat, is based on the acceptance of our neighbour as a person, as our brother and God's child. Even as it arises from this recognition of our common humanness, it contributes to the enrichment on both sides, of our awareness of this common humanity. It deepens our sensitivity and promotes understanding and a sense of unity.

The report goes on to say:

We would underline this element of real reciprocity and complete mutuality in all genuine dialogue. The enrichment it brings is

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<sup>9</sup>L. Dewart, *The Future of Belief*, p. 74, cited by Douglas, pp. 36-37.



mutual. There can be no feeling of superiority and no sense of patronage in real dialogue. It is a process of accepting and being accepted.<sup>10</sup>

If the pastoral counsellor wants to enter into his counselling relationships as a genuine human being, he cannot keep himself unaffected by the presence of his counsellee. The relationship should help both the counsellor and the counsellee to grow in their respective truths. They should not merely talk to each other but enter into the process of communicating their fear and distrust of each other. When life meets life in its authenticity, fear is dispelled and a confidence in each other's worth, as a person, is affirmed. And when this happens between two people, there is bound to be a flow of life into each other. Change is not a result of manipulation of each other but of love and respect for each other. As Christians we are called upon to witness to the revelation which we have received in Jesus Christ. But when we approach any person as an object of our evangelization, we immediately put ourselves higher than others. However, if we approach the same man as a person, we cannot but share our faith with him. Bonhoeffer expresses his thoughts on the question of evangelization,

I often ask myself why a Christian instinct frequently draws me more to the religion--less than to the religious, by which I mean not with any intention of evangelizing them, but rather, I might almost say, in brotherhood.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Report on the "Consultation on the Theology of Hindu-Christian Dialogue, Bombay, January 4th-8th, 1969," *Religion and Society*, XVI:2 (June 1969), 85.

<sup>11</sup>D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 165.

In Gandhi's *satyagraha*, truth is not abstract. It is not some "insight," but a living reality which drives a person into action in the right direction. For Gandhi truth is always expressed in some concrete situation. If a person is not motivated to actualize his truth then he has not been grasped by it. Gandhi considered himself as a *Karma-Yogi*, who realizes truth through righteous action in one's daily life. A truth which remains only at the intellectual level, is only a partial truth. Truth must be incarnated. Paul Verghese says, "The principle of the incarnation demands that communication of Truth should be through living reality and not merely through ideas. This is also the meaning of the sacramental principle."<sup>12</sup> A truth is manifested only as it is realized in some concrete form. Paul Tillich writes,

In the cognitive realm this has been clearly expressed in the Fourth Gospel, which speaks of knowing the truth by doing the truth. Only in the active realization of the true does truth become manifest.<sup>13</sup>

Gaining of "insight" in the process of counselling without a simultaneous power to effect it is a waste of time. Unless the "insight" comes from the very depth of one's being, it is impotent in itself. The power to effect change comes only with the awareness that one's whole being has been grasped by one's own truth, and there is no more resistance. Paul Verghese writes:

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<sup>12</sup>Paul Verghese, "The Crisis in Theological Education--the Need of New Perspective," *Indian Journal of Theology*, XX:4 (October-December 1971), 195.

<sup>13</sup>Tillich, I, 76.

Gandhi was super-pragmatist. So was Christ. But there was more than pragmatism in their lives. There was a basic apprehension of truth in both Christ and Gandhi; Christ called it faith; Gandhi called it *satyagraha* or being grasped by the truth. It was not primarily an ideological apprehension of verbal or conceptual truth. It was the awareness of being possessed--possessed by the fire of God. It was finding the ground of your being in God. It was also being propelled by God towards His kingdom. It is this experience of reality to which our theological seminaries should lead men and women.<sup>14</sup>

Another theological question which must be raised is--how can one become sure of his truth and act on it? Is there no possibility of making a mistake? This is a difficult question, as it should be. The nature of truth requires that one should discipline himself to hear the "inner-voice."

Gandhi replied to the question--what is Truth?: "A difficult question; but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you."<sup>15</sup> It means that the person must be responsible for his own actions. He is the one who must make his own decision ultimately. Kemp writes:

As counselors we shall each remain an object among objects unless we can open ourselves to ourselves, unless we can ask ourselves questions of depth. We need to tune in on what 'the inner man' is ready to tell us, to be concerned not only with questions of expediency, but questions of right. Integration must be not solely on the horizontal level of existence but must also be sought in the 'vertical dimension.' This involves a struggle of conscience in which the individual aspect of the ego confronts the universal aspect.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Verghese, pp. 196-197.

<sup>15</sup>R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao (comps.) *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 17.

<sup>16</sup>C. Gratton Kemp, *Intangibles in Counseling* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), p. 129.

Gandhi's Truth takes shape in the form of an authentic existence, a genuine identity, an honest person. That is, one who is authentic, is truthful to his own being. And only those who know how to be truthful to themselves have the capacity to be truthful to others. We are constantly tested of our truthfulness. There is no moment which we can isolate and free it from the demands of truth. It wants to conquer our whole existence. It does not like a schizophrenic existence but an integrated existence. Therefore, a pastoral counsellor who is authentic cannot hide his existence during an encounter with his counsellee. He will be as much alive in that moment as he would be in any other encounter. If he hides his feelings because of his method, he has hidden his authentic existence and thereby a part of his truth. But being authentic does not mean to impose oneself on the other. It is a part of a genuine process of authentication of each other. The counsellor does not give up his authenticity in the face of lack of authenticity on the part of the counsellee. A counsellor has an opportunity, especially in such moments, to make an impact on his counsellee. If a counsellor is firm in his own foundation and has a sense of positive identity, he will not be tempted to give up his authentic existence.

*Non-Violence.* The second important element in Gandhi's *satyagraha* is non-violence. This concept is intimately connected with his first concept, Truth.<sup>17</sup> According to Gandhi, non-violence

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<sup>17</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance* (New York: Schocken, 1972), p. 42.

is the means by which one seeks truth. There is no other way to seek truth. If one seeks truth through violence, he will arrive at a distortion of truth, rather than truth itself. Since truth resides in the heart of every person, non-violence is the only way to approach the truth of another person; in other words, to know another person in reality is to approach that person in the spirit of non-violence. Thus any encounter between two human beings, which is not based upon non-violence, is likely to lead to a misperception of each other.

In fact, when Gandhi talks about non-violence, he is really talking about love. Gandhi said, "*Ahimsa* means love in the sense of St. Paul, and much more."<sup>18</sup> Gandhi believed that the whole creation is governed by a higher and dominant law rather than the law of destruction. It was his belief that this law was the "law of love." In a talk given on board the ship at Suez on the way to London, Gandhi said:

I have found that life persists in the midst of destruction and, therefore, there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well-ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And if that is the law of life, we have to work it out in daily life. Wherever there are jars, wherever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love. In a crude manner I have worked it out in my life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are solved. I have found, however, that this law of love has answered as the law of destruction has never done.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the only way for man to live as a human being is to abide by the law of love. A man can actualize his own person, as well as

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<sup>18</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, March 14, 1936, cited by Miller, p. 24.

<sup>19</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 383.

of another, through this law of love. Gandhi is talking about the love, which is not self-centered but out-going, and is not concerned for its outcome. It is not limited to one's own family or to one's own nationality, but is open to everyone. There is no distinction of the lower or higher. Gandhi's non-violence is very much similar to the Christian idea of *agape*. Tillich writes:

Therefore *agape* is universal; no one with whom a concrete relationship is technically possible ('neighbor') is excluded; nor is anyone preferred. *Agape* accepts the other in spite of resistance. It suffers and forgives. It seeks the personal fulfillment of the other.<sup>20</sup>

Gandhi's *non-violence* is based on the affirmation that no man has any right to violate the integrity of another person, because no one is completely righteous and fully able to make a judgment on the other. If a man were to examine himself before judging another he will immediately realize his own errors. Thus Gandhi says:

In the dictionary of the non-violent there is no such word as an external enemy. But even for the supposed enemy he will have nothing but compassion in his heart. He will believe that no man is intentionally wicked, that there is no man but is gifted with the faculty to discriminate between right and wrong, and that if that faculty were to be fully developed, it would surely mature into non-violence.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Gandhi does not recognize sin as the basis of wickedness in man, he affirms that there is none who is free from "sinfulness." No one can claim to be so righteous as to judge his brother. Gandhi writes:

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<sup>20</sup>Tillich, I, 280.

<sup>21</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 93.

Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself I have also erred; when I see a lustful man I say to myself, so was I once; and in this way I feel kinship with every one in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy.<sup>22</sup>

When a man is blind to his own sin, he often falls into the trap of projecting his own sin unto others. Such a man lives, pretending to be righteous, at the cost of others. He is always blaming others for the ills of the community and society but never includes himself as a possible participant in the ills of the society. Such a person never realizes his own truth and destroys the possibilities of repentance and becoming fully human. Reinhold Niebuhr talks about this issue in regard to the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46),

While the righteous are contritely aware of their unworthiness of this vindication, the unrighteous are equally unconscious of their guilt. The distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous is significantly not obscured. There are those who serve their fellowmen and there are those who do not. But the one's who do are conscious of the fact that in the final judgment they are discovered not to have fulfilled the law of life; while the one's who do not are too self-centered to know of their sin.<sup>23</sup>

Gandhi talks about an ancient seeker after Truth who was confronted with the question, 'shall I bear with those who create difficulties for me, or should I destroy them?' Gandhi says:

The seeker realizes that he who went destroying others did not make headway but simply stayed where he was, while the man who suffered those who created difficulties marched ahead, and at times even took others with him. The first act of destruction taught him that the truth which was the object of his quest

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<sup>22</sup>Prabhu and Rao, pp. 2-3.

<sup>23</sup>R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), II, 43-44.

was not outside himself but within. Hence more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth. For in fighting the imagined enemy without, he neglected the enemy within.<sup>24</sup>

Thus we make another person as a scapegoat for our own errors. In this way we do violence, to another person by making him as an object, and to ourselves by not becoming aware of our sins. Thus we live in darkness and obstruct the forces of growth within us. Our mode of behavior becomes violent and we create disintegration in ourselves as well as in society. There is always some adversary as an object for our violence. We live in a period when people are suspicious of each other, nations have armed themselves against others with atomic and hydrogen bombs. We are trying to live by the law of hostility rather than love. In our search for pleasure and satisfaction of our bodily needs, we have become oblivious of our sins. There is always someone out there who is going to hurt or to manipulate us. As we cooperate in this kind of life, we help in the release of evil forces which will ultimately destroy us as human beings. Robert Miller writes that because of sin we feel separation and estrangement from our brothers and constantly live under fear:

Sin has its consequences, and one of them is that indifference and estrangement provide fertile soil for irrational hostility. Unrepented sin breeds guilt which in turn creates fear. The next step after denying that God exists is to accuse him of being evil, and the next step after turning one's back on one's neighbor is to fear that the latter will plant a knife in it. In the absence of love the other becomes a blank screen unto which we project our anxieties: the stranger is always potentially a scapegoat for our unconfessed sins.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>25</sup>Miller, p. 186.



Thus Gandhi's method of *satyagraha* teaches us that unless man becomes aware of his own anger and hostility, he will continue to find enemy on whom to project his violence. Therefore Gandhi suggested that one must purify himself before using the non-violent method. In other words, one cannot love another fully, if he has not examined his own self. A constant self-examination keeps one free, to some extent, from living a superficial life. However, Gandhi fully realizes that no man can practice non-violence without the grace of God. There is always a possibility of either hypocrisy or pride. Gandhi writes, "A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God."<sup>26</sup>

Gandhi's non-violence is an alternative to the use of violence. This means that he refuses to cooperate with the forces of evil. Rather he recognizes that there are spiritual forces within man and one must cooperate with those forces in order to become human. Therefore, if one wants to change another person, one should not use the forces of evil but the forces of the good or the "soul-force." A genuine change cannot take place with the use of evil forces. By evil forces, Gandhi means not only physical violence but any force which violates the integrity and self-respect of man.

If a change is brought about in another person with the help of those forces which do not arise out of spirit, man has been subject to the process of dehumanization. His freedom and integrity has not

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<sup>26</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 89.

been respected but rather they have been manipulated. In refusing to cooperate with the forces of evil, Gandhi was similar to the divine strategy. The strategy of God, in bringing man back to his true destiny, is the strategy of love and not of fear. The forces of evil are overcome with the forces of love. Violence is overcome with non-violence. Man is given the freedom to make a decision for his own life. He is not forced or coerced. Seifert writes:

God does not coerce man with extraneous arbitrary thunderbolts out of the blue. He maintains a situation of natural consequences that follow in particular ways. God does not compel any man's obedience or love. He provides a framework of conditions within which man acts, a standing ground that guarantees dependable natural outcome. Within this creation, continuous loving persuasion is the dynamic action of God directed toward winning the assent of men.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, Gandhi was a man and he realized that man cannot practice perfect non-violence. There are times when violence may be used with the connotation of non-violence.

Gandhi recognizes that we can violate the integrity of another through many things. Physical violence is not the only way to violate the integrity of another person. There are thousand ways in which the integrity of the other person is violated. Any time when we impose our will on somebody, or do not give him an opportunity to make his own decision, we violate his integrity. Whenever we treat him as an object, we do violence to him. John E. Smith writes:

In using violence, particularly in relation to other persons, I am effectively treating them as objects or things to be manipulated in the world; I am not appealing to their own

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<sup>27</sup> H. Seifert, *Conquest by Suffering* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 105.

standards of conduct or asking them to discipline themselves in accordance with a principle. Instead I am attempting to force them directly to act in a certain way. I am imposing my will in contact; I am not proposing a principle or course of action for consideration. Hence violent action whatever goals or ends it may ultimately imply, is not a moral or educating process; even though much can be learned from being involved in it.<sup>28</sup>

Gandhi's concept of non-violence challenges all those who are engaged in the task of motivating change in human beings. As pastoral counsellors, we must always examine our methods if they are in any way violent to the integrity of another person. We must not accept any method which seeks to manipulate human beings as objects or mere animals. For example the method of "conditioned reflex therapy" may lead to the manipulation of human beings. In the same way, any method which creates distance between the counsellee and the counsellor must be rejected at all costs. All those methods which do not allow involvement of genuine relationship with one's counsellee must not be accepted by the pastoral counsellor.

If a man does not have a genuine love and a self-respect for the essential man, it is not possible to practice non-violence. Non-violence arises out of a deep respect for the common humanity from which one cannot separate himself at any cost. Those who harbour anger and hatred in their hearts cannot but do violence to another. Non-violence emerges from the pure heart where love abounds for all men. Where there is no distinction between the black and the white,

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<sup>28</sup>J. E. Smith, "The Inescapable Ambiguity of Non-Violence," *Philosophy East and West*, XIX:2 (April 1969), 156.

between the poor and the rich, between man and woman. A non-violent person treats a person from his birth till his death as a human being. It is the deep love of one person for another that has the power to bring changes. Kemp writes:

Love has always been considered a strong change agent. Because of the love of another, many a person has changed his outlook on life. Our love for someone provides the conditions in which change in the person loved has the optimum chance of taking place.<sup>29</sup>

But no one can love another if he has not individualized himself. A person who has experienced a sense of individualization and is confident of his individual identity can really recognize another as an individual. It is only then, a person can love another in reality. Gandhi in this sense was a very individualized person. He was willing to stand alone in the face of a crisis, even if no one helped him. But he was always with people, recognizing their individualities. If one is not recognized as an individual, he cannot be loved because his integrity has already been violated. Paul Tillich writes:

Love is absent where there is no individualization, and love can be fully realized only where there is full individualization, in man. But the individual also longs to return to the unity to which he belongs, in which he participates by his ontological nature. Thus longing for reunion is an element in every love, and its realization, however fragmentary, is experienced as bliss.<sup>30</sup>

The greatness of Gandhi lies in his creative ability to make use of the indigenous theological thought patterns to emphasize the

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<sup>29</sup>Kemp, p. 162.

<sup>30</sup>Tillich, I, 280.

need for individualization. In a culture, so ancient as India, Gandhi was able to introduce the idea of individual person and his relationship with other person's on an equal basis. In a culture where people have submerged their individual personalities and adopted roles given by society, Gandhi was able to shake people into a new awareness. He was able to do all this by his gentle and non-violent way. He respected that people have the capacity to make changes--even in a rigid system such as the "Caste system" of India. He worked on the individuals as persons who have the freedom and capacity to make changes.

*Self-suffering.* Self-suffering is the third element of *satyagraha*. It is this element which gives a major positive content to Gandhi's non-violent approach in seeking truth. Thus non-violence is not merely passive, in the sense of not doing any harm to another person, but an active voluntary acceptance of any suffering arising as a result of confrontation. Suffering is not just accidental but is a part of the very process of searching for the truth. A person cannot search truth without making a sacrifice. And any sacrifice entails some suffering on the part of the person making a sacrifice. Therefore, any encounter with another human being always entails an element of sacrifice if that encounter is to be genuine.

Suffering has been considered as evil. It is true, that suffering under the demonic structures can and does become evil but it does not mean that all suffering takes place under the structures of evil. Suffering can be and is one of the dimensions of the divine

love. Miller writes, "It is not the suffering but the sacrificial act of willing acceptance that makes it spiritually effective, and sacrifice is an act of love."<sup>31</sup> Suffering is a reality in this world and it can become redemptive only when it is meaningful, "To have redemptive possibilities, suffering must be meaningful."<sup>32</sup> Therefore one must not run away from a mere suggestion that suffering has possibilities in improving relationships and personal growth. Seifert writes:

A wider experience of suffering love would also help us deal with finitude, anxiety, and estrangement of man on more profound levels than social reform. Significance and meaning for life emerge from utter absorption in greater goals outside oneself. We are rescued from superficial, casual contacts by genuine, self-giving relationships. A view of life in depth uncovers grounds for hope before which lesser threats become trivial. . . . Suffering for compassionate ends is transmuted into spiritual growth and the fulfillment of the highest purposes of existence.<sup>33</sup>

Self-suffering can become redemptive only when it is accepted voluntarily in the interest of another person. If there is an element of masochism, self-suffering will become most harmful to the person suffering as well as to the person on whose behalf suffering is undertaken. As a pastoral counsellor, he cannot escape from some kind of self-suffering. The very process of transference, which takes place between a counsellor and a counsellee, involves an element of suffering. If the counsellor retaliates by his counter-transference, he

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<sup>31</sup>Miller, p. 171.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>Seifert, p. 189.

cannot be helpful to his counsellee. On the other hand, if he makes known to his counsellee his suffering, without the intention of retaliation or withdrawing his care for him, he will help him to become aware of his mistake and thereby facilitate the process of growth.

Certainly, as pastoral counsellors, it is our task to help men to live a meaningful life. If we do not make contributions to this important aspect of life, we unknowingly help people to live a superficial existence. We are tempted to alleviate suffering and pain of our counsellees as quickly as possible so that they can return back to his society and function normally. If we do not become aware of the redemptive possibilities of suffering, we will try to alleviate all suffering and thereby block the possible growth which could have occurred in the counsellee.

Gandhi was well aware that life is more than merely the absence of suffering. And therefore he could declare, "I am more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in the prevention of suffering of my own people."<sup>34</sup>

In every human relationship there is an element of suffering and pain. The question is not merely to alleviate this pain at any cost, but to see the possibilities in the direction of personal growth and maturation of interpersonal relationships. Even in a most trivial encounter between two human beings, there is always a possibility of

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<sup>34</sup>N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), p. 161.

some suffering and pain. When we become "pleasure" oriented or "need satisfaction" oriented, we are led to think that our main purpose is to remove all suffering. In this way we are carried away with the trend of our present civilization. Pastoral counsellor can make a significant contribution to his people, if he will practice his Christian faith by emphasizing the meaningfulness of existence. Kemp writes:

If counselors assume that their task is to prepare students to fit more comfortably into the scheme of mass production, to be successful in making the grade in this competitive world, they are helping them to be more adequate in superficial living.<sup>35</sup>

It is our belief that God sent His Son into this world to liberate man from his sinful existence, and lead him to a meaningful existence. Therefore as pastoral counsellors, we cannot participate in the process, leading to superficial existence. We have to remind ourselves that in all our activities we are a witness to the love of God shown in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Christians we believe that God redeems man from his sin through His suffering love. James Douglas writes:

A faith in truth's power to overcome the world by love and accepted suffering is as essential to an understanding of the Gospel as it is lacking in a Christianity which continues to endorse warfare. The renewed presence of such faith, in the non-violence of Gandhi and Vinoba, has begun once again to reveal crucifixion as power.<sup>36</sup>

When we deal with Gandhi's *satyagraha*, we are dealing with a suffering which is accepted voluntarily. It is accepted for the

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<sup>35</sup>Kemp, p. 127.

<sup>36</sup>Douglas, p. 18.



sake of another, with the hope that it will help the person to become aware of his error and turn away from his previous path. In that sense, this kind of self-suffering is redemptive. A person takes upon himself suffering, not out of weakness, but of strength of one's own spiritual character. It arises out of love and concern, for the other, and for no other reason. If the motives do not issue out of love, suffering of this type can become demonic. Instead of redemptive it will become coercive. And ultimately, its consequences can be seen in the form of dehumanization.

With such a dangerous possibility, suffering in the hands of sinful men, is indeed a matter of great concern. Reinhold Niebuhr, who emphasizes the sinfulness of man, writes: "No sinful man, even when he understands that the law of life is love, can be trusted completely to be just, if his egotism does not meet resistance."<sup>37</sup> However, one must take a risk even when there are dangerous consequences. If we do not take that risk, we accept defeat and let the evil forces dominate our existence.

Gandhi recognized this possibility and therefore prescribed a thorough self-examination of one's motives in accepting suffering. However, he was bold enough to declare that "suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of jungle. But suffering is more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the violence of reason."<sup>38</sup> There is

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<sup>37</sup>R. Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 181.

<sup>38</sup>K. Kripalani (ed.) *All Men are Brothers* (Ahmedabad:

no doubt that Gandhi, through his suffering, was able to make an impact on the British and the Indians. Everyone who came in contact with him was not changed, but many were changed. James Douglas goes to the extent of saying:

The significance of Gandhi is that . . . he has testified to the active presence of God in the world of political man and has done so after the pattern of Jesus. In Gandhi belief met secularity in suffering love and an empire changed.<sup>39</sup>

Gandhi was greatly influenced by the life, suffering and death of Jesus Christ. He was trying to follow in his footsteps. Although he never declared himself as a baptized Christian, he was not afraid to confess that Jesus was his model. Gandhi writes:

Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions. . . . And I know that there are hundreds of Christians who believe likewise. Jesus lived and died in vain if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal Law of Love.<sup>40</sup>

Gandhi through his life, and particularly, through his suffering, evokes in us the possibilities which lie hidden in us as a result of our faith in Jesus Christ. He challenges us to try with this "impossible possibility." E. Stanley Jones, one of the greatest missionaries, who knew Gandhi personally, writes, "He awakens within us a certain homesickness, a nostalgia for a kingdom which we bartered for a mess of physical power--the Kingdom of God. Gandhi the Hindu,

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Navajivan Publishing House, 1960), p. 118.

<sup>39</sup>Douglas, p. 33.

<sup>40</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *The Law of Love* (Delhi: Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, 1963), p. 79.

whatever he says, calls us to the cross."<sup>41</sup> Another Christian, who made a revolutionary impact on the modern theology, Bonhoeffer, was also attracted to Gandhi because of suffering. Gerhard Jacobi writes, "It was Bonhoeffer's high regard for suffering, I think, which drove him to Gandhi."<sup>42</sup>

When suffering is borne out of love, it becomes redemptive in the sense of raising the dignity of man. How does suffering raise the dignity of man? The dignity of man is raised as long as man remains a human being and does not become a "thing" or "sub-human." If suffering borne out of love, for another, evokes his genuine human nature, his dignity has been raised. When suffering invokes the presence of another, not as a black or white, but as a person, man's dignity has been recognized. However, when we live superficially, we dehumanize ourselves and others through our personal contacts. This superficiality enters into every aspect of our existence. It dominates our political, economical and social existence and above all our spiritual existence. How can we restore man's dignity? J. R. Chandran writes:

God's glory is really seen in the death of Jesus Christ for the restoration of human dignity. It is therefore, legitimate that the modern ecumenical movement has a steadily deepening concern for man, and is involved in the quest for what is

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<sup>41</sup>E. S. Jones, *Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1948), p. 151.

<sup>42</sup>G. Jacobi, "Drawn Toward Suffering," in W. D. Zimmermann and R. A. Smith (eds.) *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (London: Collins, 1966), p. 73.

genuinely human, and for economic, social and political structures which will adequately safeguard the genuine humanity of all persons.<sup>43</sup>

In the suffering of Jesus Christ, we see the preciousness of man. Man is so precious for God that He is willing to empty himself and suffer for his sake. God is not forced into suffering but chooses the only means by which man's integrity is maintained. God does not overwhelm us in His suffering but gives us an opportunity to recognize our essential human nature and act accordingly. Tillich writes about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross:

This sacrifice is the end of all attempts to impose him, as a finite being, on other finite beings. It is the end of Jesusology. Jesus of Nazareth is the medium of the final revelation because he sacrifices himself completely to Jesus as the Christ. He not only sacrifices his life . . . but he also sacrifices everything in him and of him which could bring people to him as an 'overwhelming personality' instead of bringing them to that in him which is greater than he and they.<sup>44</sup>

The purpose of suffering as a part of *Satyagraha* was to help persons to become aware of their own truth rather than of Gandhi's truth. Gandhi simply wanted to break the shell so that a person may become aware of one's own truth. Gandhi believed that both good and evil are in the heart of men. And if man is given a chance, the good will ultimately come to the surface. Mumford says, "Out of the same obscure recesses of the self, where the demonic, degrading elements

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<sup>43</sup>J. R. Chandran, "Concern for Man in the Ecumenical Renewal," *Religion and Society*, XV:1 (March 1968), 32.

<sup>44</sup>Tillich, I, 136.

turk, angels and ministers of grace come forth . . ."<sup>45</sup>

How to touch the inner self of a man without doing any violence to his integrity was the issue with which Gandhi was struggling throughout his life. Gandhi was firmly convinced that love, expressed in the form of suffering, was the most potent means of touching man's heart. James Douglas writes, "Suffering love has the power to transform the oppressor, as it has already transformed the oppressed; it has the power to widen the community of strength."<sup>46</sup>

Gandhi through his suffering was trying to reach into the heart of man by crossing the apathetic walls which men of violence had built around them. He knew that if he could reach into the very recesses of man, he will meet the real man, the man who is ready to listen and act justly. If we, Christians, want to transform this world, we have to become serious about the message of the Cross and its application to the realities of this world. We cannot ignore the Cross by saying that it is only an ideal. We must try and apply the message of the Cross into every aspect of our relationship. If we keep the ideal and the actual separate, there is no hope which we can proclaim honestly. We may say, that we cannot attain the ideal, but we cannot justify our inaction on that assumption. We must try to put into practice our ideal or else we must declare ourselves to be on the side of those forces which are trying to speed-up the process of

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<sup>45</sup>L. Mumford, *The Conduct of Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), p. 246.

<sup>46</sup>Douglas, *The Non-Violent Cross*, p. 23.

dehumanization. The hope lies in following the message of Jesus Christ. Moltmann writes:

In fact, there is no true *theology of hope* which is not first of all a *theology of the cross*. There will be no new hope for humanity, if it does not arise from the destruction of the apathetic 'man of action' through a recognition of the suffering he causes. Apathetic existence must be changed into its opposite; an existence of pathos leading to sympathy, sensitivity and love. There will be no *christian*, that is, no liberating theology without the life giving memory of the suffering of God on the cross.<sup>47</sup>

Christians are afraid to look at the Cross because it demands that we become genuine and authentic. How can we stop the trend of our civilization and return to "the past"? There is a fear that we will have to give up the security of our castle and make sacrifice for the other. We feel secure and safe in the midst of violence, injustice and degradation, as long as it does not touch us. But the fact is that no one can escape from the impact of what happens. We are dehumanized and degraded in a most subtle way. We become isolated from the other, cut off from feelings for the other. Every man finds himself "doing his thing," no matter what happens next door. How can we change this apathetic condition which threatens to dehumanize men on a large scale? This is happening in technological civilizations as well as in agrarian civilizations, such as India. This is a matter of great concern for the churches. The question is whether the churches are combating this trend or contributing in the reinforcement of this trend. Moltmann writes:

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<sup>47</sup>Jürgen Moltmann, "The Crucified God," *Theology Today*, XXXI:1 (April 1974), 8-9.

If this society is to turn itself toward humanity, the churches must become christians. They must destroy the idols of action and apathy, of success and anxiety; proclaim the human, the suffering, the Crucified God; and learn to live in his situation. They must discover the meaning of suffering and sorrow, and spread abroad the spirit of compassion, sympathy, and love. They must confront successful and despairing man with the truth of the Cross in his situation, so that man may become a compassionate, joyous, and thereby free being.<sup>48</sup>

### Psychosocial Implications of Satyagraha

Gandhi's *satyagraha* as a method of personal change has several important psychosocial implications for the development of pastoral counselling. Gandhi provides ideas which are not only revolutionary but in some sense a kind of corrective to some of the notions of our contemporary technological and pragmatic culture. T. K. Oommen writes:

I seriously believe that some of the Gandhian notions are relevant not as practicable propositions for the building of society but as guiding principles for personal and group behavior and correctives and antidote to some of the tendencies in contemporary societies.<sup>49</sup>

*Autonomy and Community.* The concept of autonomy is very much evident in Gandhi's thought. By autonomy is meant the ability to govern oneself as an individual. Gandhi believed that this basic urge is present in all human beings. Whether one is a child or an adult, a man or a woman, autonomy is the basic quality of the human nature. Therefore, one must develop his autonomy to the fullest

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<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>49</sup>T. K. Oommen, "Is Gandhi Relevant Today?" *Religion and Society*, XVI (September 1969), 50.

expression. Autonomy is an integral part of one's self-respect and dignity. If anyone tries to suppress the autonomy of a person, one is violating the dignity of that person. The personhood or the identity of a person is founded on the quality of autonomy. This autonomy emerges as a result of a basic goodness of one's own being. Erikson writes, "From the sense of inner goodness emanates autonomy and pride; from the sense of badness, doubt and shame. To develop autonomy a firmly developed and convincingly continued state of early trust is necessary."<sup>50</sup>

Gandhi's *satyagraha* was an expression of the autonomy based on the fundamental goodness of human nature. His method was a way of asserting himself and refusing to be manipulated by another. This assertion was from the very depth of his being. He was willing to die for the sake of keeping his "manhood" or personhood. In fighting against the British, Gandhi was trying to seek freedom in a symbolic form. He wanted his people to recognize this human quality for becoming an individual person of infinite worth with freewill. So important was this psychological aspect of human nature, that he objected to the socialistic and communistic systems of Government and preferred only the democratic. In a discussion with Louis Fisher, Gandhi said, "I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if I want to. . . ."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>E. H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 84-85.

<sup>51</sup>K. G. Mashruwala, *Gandhi and Marx* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1951), Appendix III, p. 109.



In the context of the Indian society, Gandhi was making a revolutionary impact on the basic life style of the Indian people. Gandhi had experienced in his own life the heavy weight of society. In his autobiography, he clearly mentions about his disapproval<sup>52</sup> of his father for arranging marriage for him at an early age. Gandhi had experienced the heavy hand of society in many other areas of life. Society, in India, still maintains a strong control on the development of individual personality. Survival of social systems and customs is much more important than the individuation of a human personality.

Y. B. Damle, a professor of sociology writes:

In the Indian context, however, the first observation one could make about this frame of reference is that culture and social systems are much more important than personality. In fact there is an implicit assumption that culture and social systems completely imply the personality almost in a deterministic fashion. Individual personality has no meaning or relevance except as a carrier of statuses and roles which are relevant to one's own situation. . . . There is the least amount of opportunity for individuation or development of personality according to one's predilections, liking, aptitude, etc. Individual personality has to lie submerged either in role or collectivity. An individual merely becomes a tool for the implementation of cultural and social sanctions. Thus, to my mind, it is a characteristic peculiarity of the Indian social system as against the social system in a Western society, where individuation and personality development are equally emphasized.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore Gandhi recognized that freedom from Britain will not mean much, if the people did not develop the quality of autonomy in their own lives first. Gandhi said, "My opinion is becoming daily

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<sup>52</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 10.

<sup>53</sup>Y. B. Damle, "Frame of Reference for Sociological Studies in India," *Religion and Society*, XI:4 (December 1964), 14.

more confirmed that we shall achieve our real freedom only by effort from within, i.e., by self-purification and self-help, and therefore, by the strictest adherence to truth and non-violence."<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, *satyagraha* was not only a method to gain independence from Britain but also an exercise in recovering one's sense of autonomy. Gandhi knew that people who do not respect their autonomy allow themselves to be exploited. Therefore he tried through his method of *satyagraha*, to inculcate a sense of autonomy in the Indian people so that they could stand on their own feet and face all kinds of situations. Gandhi recognized like Angyal:

Perhaps one of the most paradoxical manifestation of impaired autonomy is the behavior of a person who not only fails to assert himself but effectively invites exploitation. By giving another the power to use him, this person exchanges his status of living organism for that of a mere tool.<sup>55</sup>

A healthy sense of autonomy is essential for the growth of one's personality. If one has not developed his autonomy, he is unable to make decisions for himself. He will not know his own foundation to stand upon firmly. He will be shaky and therefore constantly dependent on others to show the right path. Many people of this type prefer authority and authority-centered religion to find their security. However, religion which is authority-centered and does not give an opportunity for full expression of personality is a restrictive religion. It often cripples a person not only emotionally

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<sup>54</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 68.

<sup>55</sup>Angyal, *Neurosis and Treatment* (New York: Wiley, 1965), p. 12.

but in many other areas of life.

Gandhi's emphasis on seeking one's own truth means seeking one's own foundation. It means that one is firm and authentic in the moments which call for his response. Only that person who has a firm sense of autonomy has the capacity to make his own goals and pursue them without any fear. He will not make any compromise or merge in a crowd. However, he will remain open to various possibilities to which he may give his attention, but he does not feel any obligation to pay attention to everything which comes to his notice. He seems to be in control of himself and the things around him. But a person who lacks autonomy is without "essence." He is not a master of his own life. His fate depends upon others. Angyal writes:

When the lack of autonomy is generalized one, the person's course seems to be determined by external happenings; he becomes a straw in the wind, a piece of driftwood carried by currents, a creature of circumstances. This state of affairs is created by the person himself. A self-image strongly coloured by feelings of impotence, whatever its origin, will affect the person's behavior and way of living and may eventually bring about an actual reduction of self-determination.<sup>56</sup>

The consequences of autonomy are evident in Gandhi's *satyagraha*. A *satyagrahi* refuses to cooperate with another person in any act which is contradictory to his own convictions. He has the ability and capacity to disagree and express his unwillingness to participate with another person. A *satyagrahi* feels that one must be honest to his own truth even at the cost of giving his life. This

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

firmness is not irrational but well thought out, as a result of a thorough self-examination. Gandhi was bold enough to say:

I do not want anybody to give up his convictions or to suppress himself. I do not believe that a healthy and honest difference of opinion will injure our cause. But opportunism, camouflage or patched-up compromises certainly will. If you must dissent, you should take care that your opinions voice your inner-most convictions and not intended merely as convenient party cry.<sup>57</sup>

But who can express his opinions, except those who have their own thoughts and ideas. If one does not express his ideas and thoughts clearly, one gradually gives up the quality of being spontaneous and authentic. Gandhi felt that each individual person must have the freedom to express his views without any fear of punishment. He believed that man becomes an individual person only in the process of expressing and actualizing his inner being. Therefore he insisted on freedom as a necessary structure of society. He says, "No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man. Just as a man will not grow horns or a tail, so he will not exist as a man if he has no mind of his own."<sup>58</sup> Gandhi's emphasis on having "one's own mind" is indeed a great contribution to the Indian society. However, Gandhi did not emphasize autonomy at the cost of society. He recognized that a complete autonomy without any regard for other is as dangerous as the lack of autonomy. When an individual becomes self-centered, his trend of

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<sup>57</sup>Bose, p. 190.

<sup>58</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Harifan*, February 1, 1942, cited by J. P. Chandrer (ed.) *Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Lahor: Indian Printing Works, 1949), p. 321.

individualism begins to affect others adversely.

Gandhi's emphasis on a balanced view of individualism and of one's responsibility to one's community, is very essential for the development of a non-violent society. Kemp writes, "Autonomy without responsibility is one of the main sources of anxiety in this half-century. We have failed to accept the truth that freedom and responsibility are integrally related. We have not encouraged a balanced relationship between them."<sup>59</sup> If we wish to apply Gandhi's principles of *Satyagraha* in interpersonal relationships, we have to recognize those two poles and arrive at a non-violent solution. How to create this harmonious balance between the individual and the society, so that both may continue to grow and help each other's progress. We cannot treat the individual without taking seriously the impact of the individual on the society. One of the dangers of the technological culture is that it produces competition on an impersonal level. And when people are not treated on personal level, there is no sense of responsibility for each other. In that sense individualism is a danger signal for violence at all levels of society. Kemp writes,

A competitive society that is geared to mass production and that idealizes technical and planning reason cannot expect its citizens to be sincerely interested in or feel responsible for one another, even including members of their own family.<sup>60</sup>

We should not encourage this type of individualism at any cost. A community based on this type of individualism does not possess any healing qualities, on the other hand, it can only create loneliness,

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<sup>59</sup>Kemp, p. 107.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 68.

meaninglessness and above all, despair and hopelessness.

As pastoral counsellors, we have a very important task in this matter. The question is how much individualism and what type of individualism do we encourage in our counsellees? Our own belief in this matter will affect the nature of counselling which we do with the people of India. There is no doubt, that at present we have to encourage individuation so that people can make decisions on their own. However, the question is ever present--How much individualism is necessary? Certainly the concept of "doing your thing" sounds very individualistic and it seems that a person engaged in doing one's "own thing" has no concern for the other. The author would not recommend the philosophy of "doing your thing" for the Indian situation. Leroy S. Rouner writes:

India can afford neither the old exclusive communalism of the traditional castes, nor the atomic free-standing individualism of Western Existentialism. Neither a valid individual freedom nor a truly creative community can exist without the other. Unless the individual is free the community becomes coercive, and the communal home turns into prison. Unless the community is there to provide growing soil for the seed of an individual's free creativity individualism becomes strident or self-pitying and then burns up.<sup>61</sup>

Gandhi is able to visualize an ideal society in which perfect individualism can be practiced but he recognizes that it is impossible. However, Gandhi always encourages people to grow towards an approximation of the ideal. For Gandhi it is only within the context of a non-violent society that individuals can practice perfect

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<sup>61</sup>Leroy S. Rouner, "Individualism, Communalism and Existentialism," *Religion and Society*, XII:4 (December 1965), 23.

individualism, without doing harm to anybody else. Gandhi writes:

If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state. But the ideal is never fully realized in life.<sup>62</sup>

Certainly, we must have an ideal before us, a kind of future towards which we can direct our energies. In having an ideal, we can participate, in some measure, in something more than our own existence. The ability to look beyond our own finite existence gives not only meaning to our existence, now, but helps us to join in a much larger goal of the whole existence than our own. Therefore, individuality cannot be limited to one's own existence. Henry A. Murray writes:

Individuality is something to be built for the sake of something else. It is a structure of potential energies for expenditure in the service of an idea, a cultural endeavor, the betterment of man, an emergent value . . . an individual self is made only to be lost--that is, only to pledge to some enterprise that is in league with a good future; and thereby find itself once more.<sup>63</sup>

This is the type of individuality Gandhi was trying to attain for himself and for the people of India. The freedom which he wanted was not for its own sake, the life which he wanted was not for his own, it was all for the sake of others. This is where Gandhi was following the teachings of Jesus Christ. This kind of individuality

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<sup>62</sup>Bose, pp. 78-79.

<sup>63</sup>H. A. Murray, "Individuality: The Meaning and Content of Individuality in Contemporary America," *Daedalus*, LXXXII (Spring 1958), 47.

is different, it is ready to be sacrificed for the sake of another. It has this nature, because the origin of this individuality is not in selfish love but in a suffering love for the improvement of another. He wanted the freedom of India not just for the sake of freedom but for the sake of others. He declared:

I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of English men. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. . . . My love therefore of nationalism, or my idea of nationalism, is that my country may become free, that if need be, the whole country may die, so that the human races may live . . .<sup>64</sup>

Certainly this attitude cannot be in contradiction with the teachings of Jesus Christ. If we recognize that this is a Christian attitude, there is nothing which should stop us from integrating this in the practice of pastoral counselling in India. We cannot encourage the development of autonomy and individuality at the cost of other people. One becomes an individual, in the real sense, when he is not afraid to sacrifice himself for the other. This is one of the directions toward which personal change should lead people. This sounds difficult and ideal but there is no reason not to try this if one feels that this is the right direction. One of the characteristics of neurosis is that people even though when they know that they are on the wrong path, continue to go ahead. They do not have the guts to stop and walk into a new direction. If we believe that this type of individuality is in line with the Christian faith, there should not

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<sup>64</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Selected Writings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 278.



be any hesitation to practice this concept.

As Christians, we should be grateful to Gandhi for providing this redemptive concept of autonomy which reinforces the teachings of Jesus Christ. If we want to establish a society where people live by the law of love rather than by the law of hate, we must encourage a healthy sense of autonomy.

*Identity.* When we study Gandhi's *satyagraha*, we become aware of the problem of identity with which Gandhi was struggling throughout his life. Of course, the issue of identity to him was not only personal but also national. He was interested in a concept of identity which would be more inclusive rather than exclusive. Instead of dividing one man from another, it would unite. His method of *satyagraha* was a demonstration of the fact that man's identity should not be based on his physical and external features but on the common humanity which cuts across all barriers of race and colour. He was fighting with British people because he considered them first as human beings and only secondarily as British. The British did not become Indians; neither did Indians become British, but both of them recognized each other as human beings. There was no loss of any national or cultural identity in meeting each other as human beings. As a matter of fact, meeting with each other as human beings helped each other to claim their identities with a sense of pride. Each could claim his own national and cultural identity without humiliating the other. The British could assert themselves with a sense of pride, not by degrading the identity of another but by respecting it.

In this sense, Gandhi's *satyagraha* was indeed a revolution in the transformation of relationships at all levels. Gandhi himself declared, "A non-violent revolution is not a programme of 'seizure of power' but it is a programme of transformation of relationships."<sup>65</sup>

Gandhi was interested in bringing about a fundamental change in man by dealing with him not on the basis of his external features or even his deeds, but on intrinsic quality of being human. To deal with man on the basis of his external features is to degrade his identity. Our history is full of this kind of dehumanization. We still treat people on the basis of their colour and racial background. When this tendency becomes pervasive in a society, people try to mould their identity on the basis of external characteristics. Instead of revealing their inner-self, they project their external appearance. In a society where people relate to each other on the basis of external differences rather than similarities, violence is used to deal with each other openly as well as in subtle forms. The person is manipulated by external means and recognized not to possess any power to bring change on his own. Gandhi, writing to Wybergh, makes his point,

The function of violence is to obtain reform by external means; the function of passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is to obtain it by growth from within; which, in its turn, is obtained by self-suffering, self-purification.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (Bombay: Jhaveri & Tendulkar, 1951), III, 29.

<sup>66</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1962), X, 248.

Gandhi believed that all men have a common root and therefore must be respected irrespective of any physical difference. He said,

I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, it was difficult for Gandhi to reject any human being as unfit for confrontation. The great faith in the oneness of the human nature motivated Gandhi to recognize even the meanest person, worth his attention. No wonder that Gandhi dared to write personal letters of confrontation to men like Hitler and Mussolini. Gandhi was able to see in another person, a part of himself. Even though the other was unique and different, in reality there was no difference in essence. It was only when the other was looked upon as "different" that the forces of evil created a relationship, contaminated with violence. Sankaranaryana writes:

Injury is always directed towards one who is looked upon as an enemy. An enemy is other to oneself, distinct, different and opposed to oneself and is the source of distrust, fear and hatred. . . . To establish *ahimsa* in the heart, the process has to be reversed. One who is wedded to *ahimsa* has no enemy; for he has no hatred, fear or delusion. He has no delusion as he sees no duality. He sees nothing as an other to him, he sees everything as another manifestation like himself of the same Infinite diversely expressed.<sup>68</sup>

Gandhi emphasized on those qualities of human nature which bind people to each other rather than divide them. *Satyagraha* was a

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, XXV, 199.

<sup>68</sup> P. Sankaranaryana, "Ahimsa and Hinduism," *Religion and Society*, X:1 (March 1963), 49.

method to evoke this basic truth of common humanity in his opponents. He persuaded them to view man from a different perspective. He wanted them to expand their consciousness so that they could see behind the "Indian," not just a poor black person but a human being, having the same common source. In this way, Gandhi was touching upon the most crucial issue which man faces today. How can one person be unique and still maintain a fundamental sense of unity with all other persons? This is a great need of our time. Erikson recognizes this insight and writes, "Truth in Gandhi's sense points to the next step in man's realization of man as one all-human species, and thus to our only chance to transcend what we are."<sup>69</sup> Unless man becomes humble and realizes that all men are created on the "Image of God," men will always perceive other men as "different" and rationalize for their violence and injustices in the name of being "different" and superior than others. The more a person becomes "different" and isolated from the other, the more violent he is likely to be. When one compares himself with others on the basis of superiority or inferiority, he treats others as objects rather than as human beings. Others become objects to be violated for the sake of one's own fulfillment.

Sankaranaryana writes:

The urge to *himsa* (violence) arises only in man who are extroverts, whose mind goes through the senses seeking gratification in external sense-objects and who get angry or afraid whenever anything hinders such gratification. . . . The mind must be

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<sup>69</sup>E. H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 413.

turned inward and made to dwell on what is unitary, and not what is divisive. Then there will be no occasion for *himsa*; for, no other will appear against whom *himsa* can be directed.<sup>70</sup>

This may not be the best psychological explanation of the causes of violence but it certainly reveals one of the dimensions involved in the perpetuation of violence. The psychological truth is that when people do not understand the other, they often create an exaggerated image of the other and pour their violence on that image. When the other is looked upon as "different" and not as unique, we tend to develop a functional concept of man. When we compare one person to another on the basis of external features, we tend to make him into an object. In fact, classifying people into neat categories makes it convenient for us to treat them on an impersonal level and thereby violate their integrity. Man becomes a commodity and his value depends upon his usefulness. His value goes up and down with the changes in his age, his appearance and any other external quality he might possess.

Erich Fromm writes:

As with any other commodity it is the market which decides the value of these human qualities, yes, even their very existence. If there is no use for the qualities a person offers, he has none, just as an unusable commodity is valueless though it might have its use value.<sup>71</sup>

For Gandhi the value of a person is inherent in his own personhood. We can recognize this value only as we approach the other

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<sup>70</sup>Sankaranaryana, p. 50.

<sup>71</sup>E. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1941), p. 19.

in the spirit of love and care. Gandhi's love is not passive or paternal but it has maternal quality. This love is outgoing and is willing to take risk of suffering for the sake of another. It is only when people experience genuine love and sacrificial love, they become aware of their genuine identity. Gandhi was trying to help his opponents to become aware of their genuine identity so that they could recognize the genuine identity in others. Charles Hauter writes: "It is by becoming persons ourselves that we discover the persons of our fellow-men."<sup>72</sup> Gandhi was interested in a change which will widen the horizon of man's consciousness so that he may become a person in his own right. Unless a man has realized his own identity, he will not be able to perceive others as they are. He will project his prejudices and fantasies on others. A person who has not become aware of his intrinsic personal worth cannot recognize the personal worth of others. A person who is shaky in his own being cannot be objective and clear in his perception of others. Shoben writes:

To the extent that the change yields a greater harvest of self-knowledge, a widened sense of self-determination, and an enlarged capacity to act in accordance with the principle of intrinsic personal values, they represent psychological growth; to the extent that they narrow the experience of inner-directedness, entail increased degrees of self-deception, and blur the distinction between things and persons, they suggest pathology and a failure to realize potential assets that are distinctly human.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Charles Hauter, "Les deux natures en Christ," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse*, cited by Kemp, p. 129.

<sup>73</sup>E. J. Shoben, "Personal Worth in Education and Counseling," in J. Krumboltz (ed.) *Revolution in Counseling* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 72.

The person who has become aware of his genuine identity is not only free to act but acts in accordance with his own truth. He cannot exist without expressing his being because he cannot be untrue to his own being. He feels a sense of confidence in whatever he does. He acts not because others expect him to act but because of his own inner convictions. He is not afraid to be authentic in the presence of another. On the other hand he feels an inner compulsion to be honest. According to Gandhi one cannot *not* cooperate with another if he is not honest and cooperative with his own inner being. Thus Gandhi encouraged people to be honest in their relationships with all human beings. One cannot be honest in certain areas of life and dishonest in others. This is not a sign of health but of sickness responsible for much unnecessary suffering in this world. Knight writes:

The healthy person has a combined feeling of freedom and of inner compulsion. He feels free that his course is determined by standards, beliefs, knowledge, aspirations, that are an integral part of himself and he can do no other; and yet at the same time he feels free . . . it (freedom) connotes feeling of well being, of self-esteem, of confidence, of inner satisfaction based on successful use of one's energies for achievement that promote the best interest of one's fellowman as well as one's own . . .<sup>74</sup>

Gandhi's concept of identity is not static but dynamic. The truth which one holds is always in the process of growing and therefore every encounter with the truth of another is an opportunity to grow further. A person grows into his own unique identity but at

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<sup>74</sup>Robert P. Knight, "Determinism, Freedom and Psychotherapy," *Psychiatry*, IX (1946), 256.

the same time he identifies more and more with the others. There is a sense of separateness but not of alienation. In fact if there is no separateness, the possibility of identification cannot exist. The tension must always be present between two people but this tension must not be used for alienation but for reconciliation and coming together. Angyal writes:

In loving someone the person recognizes that this identity exists. The term 'we-feeling' may have been coined to indicate the kind of 'identification' I have in mind--an inclusion into the same unit, a sense of oneness that exists, emotionally, in spite of the recognition of separateness . . . In an ideal case the person who loves, in spite of his identification with the other, allows the other to live his or her life and does not want to take over.<sup>75</sup>

According to Gandhi one is separate from the other not in the sense of not needing each other but in the sense of being able to come together. How can one sacrifice himself for the sake of another if he is not separate and unique? In fact, only that person, who has developed his identity fully, is able to love others and sacrifice himself. According to Gandhi, the more one becomes aware of his true identity the more he is able to identify with others. The circle of identification goes on increasing till one is able to identify with the whole mankind. Of course, Gandhi recognizes "Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification."<sup>76</sup> But, Gandhi was moving in that direction. Erikson also mentions about identity as, "the process . . . always changing and developing; at

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<sup>75</sup>Angyal, p. 25.

<sup>76</sup>Gandhi, *Selected Writings*, p. 281.



its best it is a process of increasing differentiation, and it becomes ever more inclusive as the individual grows aware of a widening circle of others significant to him, from the maternal person to 'mankind.'<sup>77</sup> Gandhi maintained a creative tension between the pole of differentiation and the pole of identification. Both are necessary for the full development of one's genuine identity. However, the concept of identity was worked out in the context of a much larger sphere than one's own existence. Gandhi was concerned for the welfare of others. He recognized that his own welfare was closely connected with the welfare of others. In this sense his own identity was very much related to the identities of others. He believed in mutual growth. Gandhi wrote:

I do not believe . . . that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer. . . . I believe in the essential unity of man and . . . of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains . . . the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent. I do not help opponents without at the same time helping myself and my co-workers.<sup>78</sup>

Thus we can observe that Gandhi used *Satyagraha* to confront his opponents and challenge them to become human beings and treat others as human beings. If we observe people only from their outside appearance, we will miss great opportunities of meeting the genuine person. Whether we are counselling or relating with other persons, we are always given an opportunity to enter into a genuine dialogue.

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<sup>77</sup>E. H. Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 23.

<sup>78</sup>Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XXV, 390.

One does not have to go into depth to be genuine with each other. In every situation, there are many opportunities to act according to our own conviction and treat others as human beings. Of course, when we are in conflict with each other, the importance of recognizing and affirming the existence of other increases. Martin Buber writes:

I believe, despite all, that the people in this hour can enter into conversation, into a genuine conversation, with one another. A genuine conversation is one in which each of the partners, even when he stands in the opposition to the other, heeds, affirms, and confirms him as this existing other; only thus can the opposition, certainly not be removed from the world, but be humanly arbitrated and led towards its overcoming.<sup>79</sup>

Gandhi's *satyagraha* was a kind of conversation in which the identity of the opponent was affirmed even as Gandhi continued to influence him. As pastoral counsellors we are quite often in this position. How can we influence the others without violating the integrity of others? This can be done only when we have a genuine dialogue. Gandhi's *satyagraha* is of no use if there is no genuine confrontation with each other. Maurice S. Friedman writes:

Genuine conversation, like every genuine fulfillment of relation between men, means acceptance of otherness. This means that although one may desire to influence the other and lead him to share in one's relation to truth, one accepts and confirms him in his being this particular man made in this particular way. One wishes him to have a different relation to one's truth in accordance with his individuality.<sup>80</sup>

In summary, we can conclude that unless we recognize the

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<sup>79</sup> Martin Buber, "Genuine Conversation and the Possibilities of Peace," *Cross Currents*, V:4 (Fall 1955), 296.

<sup>80</sup> Maurice S. Friedman, "Healing through Meeting: Martin Buber and Psychotherapy," *Cross Currents*, V:4 (Fall 1955), 298.

fundamental unity of mankind, we will not be able to recognize and affirm the identity of another person. We must begin with similarities rather than differences. If we believe that there is a fundamental unity of mankind, we can hope to work for reconciliation and mutual affirmation. Unless we develop this kind of attitude in our own being, we cannot help people to grow.

*Conscience and Guilt.* Another psychosocial implication of Gandhi's *satyagraha* is in the area of conscience and guilt. Even though Gandhi did not present any systematic analysis of either conscience or guilt, his method was based on the fundamental assumption that conscience is present in all human beings and guilt could be evoked by touching the conscience of a person. Gandhi believed in the universality of conscience and guilt, but did not believe that all men have the same conscience. According to him, conscience is different in every person. Gandhi wrote,

The golden rule of conduct . . . is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and that we shall always see *Truth* in fragments and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all.<sup>81</sup>

Gandhi used his method of *satyagraha* with the implicit aim of evoking a feeling of guilt in his opponents for having done wrong. He wanted his opponents to feel guilt for having violated the integrity, not only of others but also their own. He recognized that in every person there is this important motivating force which helps people

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<sup>81</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, September 23, 1926, cited in L. Fisher, *The Essential Gandhi* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 213.

to actualize the best of their personalities. The faculty of conscience is present in all persons irrespective of the cultural influence. Gandhi was not talking about the super ego as described by Freud but of conscience which is a part of being human. One cannot be without this human quality. It is not a result of parental introjects but is inherited as a part of being human. Angyal writes:

There is another aspect which does not depend on swallowing something that has been forced down one's throat by society. But expresses certain value attitudes inherent in human nature. I derive this factor from the trend toward homonomy, from the need to belong and to identify with persons, groups, or causes. Guilt generated by this conscience may be termed 'real guilt.' It is not fear but an emotional reaction to having acted against somebody . . . with which one is genuinely identified; such an act of disloyalty is also an offense against one's own integrity. The pattern that underlies the experience of real guilt, in spite of the wide cultural variation of its content, is a universal expression of a universal human trend.<sup>82</sup>

Thus we can see that conscience makes demands upon the person to be oneself and to remain human. "He must make himself more than an animal, if he is not to fall below the level of beast."<sup>83</sup> A genuine conscience makes demands upon a person not only to remain human but to grow into full maturity. Therefore, it is an indicator for a man to examine his being and to check whether he has been actualizing his human potentialities or blocking them in favor of some other possibilities, which might be gratifying for the time being. The possibilities of changing the direction of one's being in accordance with one's own values lies in the act of becoming guilty. Of course, this

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<sup>82</sup>Angyal, p. 114.

<sup>83</sup>Mumford, p. 92.

does not mean that guilt automatically brings change. It only creates a possibility for the person to assert his being and live accordingly. Martin Heidegger writes, "the call of conscience as having the character of the demand that man in his finitude actualize his genuine potentialities and this means to become guilty."<sup>84</sup> Recently there has been a somewhat negative attitude towards guilt feelings. Angyal writes, "Many therapists regard guilt feelings as an entirely negative feature."<sup>85</sup> We recognize that there are many instances of immature conscience and therefore of superficial or neurotic guilt. We must make a distinction between the real guilt and neurotic guilt. Clinebell writes:

Objectively, appropriate guilt is the result of actual damage to persons; subjectively, it stems from the misuse of that degree of freedom one possesses. It is the consequence of violating the values which the mature side of one's conscience regards as authentic and significant. In contrast, neurotic guilt feelings are produced by the immature side of conscience --i.e., values which were rewarded or punished by one's parents. This is motivated by fear of punishment and rejection, rather than a positive striving for what one wholeheartedly affirms as good.<sup>86</sup>

To feel guilt for a genuine violation of one's own being is not only necessary for one's psychological and spiritual growth but is essential for the sanity of mankind. When the real guilt, along with the neurotic guilt, is suppressed or removed as undesirable or

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<sup>84</sup>M. Heidegger, *Essays in Metaphysics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), p. 74.

<sup>85</sup>Angyal, p. 233.

<sup>86</sup>H. J. Clinebell, Jr., *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 224.

inhibiting in seeking pleasure and satisfaction from one's environment, human beings begin to exploit others and are willing to be exploited. In a situation like this man becomes apathetic and does not care what happens to others or even to himself. It is the task of the pastoral counsellor to create guilt feelings in people so that they may begin to function like healthy human beings. Angyal writes:

The focal problem is *real guilt* as defined in the chapter on universal ambiguity, i.e., the person's emotional response to having acted against not just some externally imposed standards but against his own genuine loyalties or against people to whom he related not merely with fear but with love. . . . To feel guilt about such violations of homonomous bonds is part and parcel of healthy human functioning.<sup>87</sup>

Of course Gandhi would not want people to feel guilty for breaking the standards imposed from outside. Unless these standards and values have been assimilated and become part of one's authentic self-hood. Gandhi was therefore not interested as much in the culturally conditioned guilt as he was in the universal guilt located in the very nature of man. It is for this reason that Gandhi used his method of *satyagraha* against the British and prescribed it against all forms of injustice. It was his belief that all human beings are capable of feeling guilt if they are aroused in the context of love and forgiveness. Maslow writes:

Intrinsic guilt is the consequence of betrayal of one's own inner nature or self, a turning off the path to self-actualization, and is essentially justified self-disapproval. It is therefore not as culturally relative as is Freudian guilt . . . it is a discrepancy from something profoundly real within the person rather than from accidental, arbitrary

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<sup>87</sup>Angyal, p. 234.

or purely relative localism. Seen in this way, it is good, even *necessary*, for a person's development to have intrinsic guilt when he deserves to. It is not just a symptom to be avoided at any cost but is rather an inner guide for growth toward actualization of the real self, and of its potentialities.<sup>88</sup>

Allport also recognizes the universality of conscience in the human race. He warns that conscience is not the "lingering vestige of parental coercion and childhood fear," but that in adult it is "functionally autonomous of its roots" and is an "arbiter of adult values."<sup>89</sup> Allport agrees that in the process of maturing, people rediscover the essential truth of their own religious and cultural heritage and "incorporate them into a wholly productive and rational conscience."<sup>90</sup> Ultimately, each man must make a decision on the basis of what one thinks and feels to be the truth. He may get help from others to clarify his own point of view, but when it comes to making a decision he cannot escape from his commitment and involvement, as an individual person, in his own decision.

Gandhi prescribed his method of *satyagraha* for all people and in all situations. Gandhi was not interested as much in the outcome as he was in the effort. Therefore, analysis of *satyagraha* from a pragmatic point of view is difficult. It may be concluded that *satyagraha* may not achieve its aim in all situations, but that does

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<sup>88</sup> A. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (New York: Van Nostrand, Reinhold, 1962), pp. 194-195.

<sup>89</sup> G. W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 89.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

not bother Gandhi. "But one must scrupulously avoid the temptation of a desire for results."<sup>91</sup> Even a failure is part of *satyagraha*. He prescribed it for all people because he was convinced that all men have some awareness of the basic moral values. Tillich writes, "Man by nature has an awareness of the universally valid moral norms. This awareness is potentially given to every man."<sup>92</sup> Gandhi was interested in a change which involved the whole being of a person and not just the cognitive processes. He did not want to dehumanize a person by giving emphasis only on the cognitive processes. He wanted to go beyond the cognitive processes and touch the very core of the human person where man's essence lies. To ignore man's essence and to highlight the cognitive development is a kind of violence which we often perpetuate. It means that certain people who have a highly developed cognitive mind, are placed as superior than others who have not inherited a superior mind or who did not have the opportunities to develop their cognitive processes. Now it does not mean that we should not take into consideration the cognitive processes when we want to initiate any change in a person, but to consider them as part of the whole person. Very often, as change agents, we depend too much on the cognitive processes for results. When change is regarded as a result of changes in the cognitive processes, this tends to be, "rather impersonal, highly manipulative, ahistorical, symptom-

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<sup>91</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 381.

<sup>92</sup>P. Tillich, *Morality and Beyond* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 19.



reducing orientation."<sup>93</sup> If we depend only on the cognitive processes of a person, we are not involving the whole person. Any change brought about in this way will be of short duration and the symptoms will come back. In order to bring about a genuine change the whole being must be involved. We must create conditions so that the person is motivated in his whole being. Only then genuine change in the right direction can take place. Kemp writes:

Genuine change in behavior does not take place without total *involvement*. Psychologically, this means that the individual is involved on the cognitive, conative and motoric levels; that is, his involvement consists of his thinking, perception, meaning, feeling, and the action implied in carrying out the decision.<sup>94</sup>

Kemp goes on saying:

A comprehensive view of behavioral change from the philosophic viewpoint includes the place and function of the will and conscience. Regardless of how the counselor might describe (them) . . . he should not completely reject either as agents in the change process.<sup>95</sup>

The nature of the 'real guilt' is such that it is always present in a person who has violated the integrity of another person. He may suppress it but cannot eradicate it completely. He may transform it or displace it, but can never get rid of it. He may even suffer from its consequences in the form of psychosomatic symptoms, but can never be free from it, unless he becomes *subhuman* or *mechanical*. If we

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<sup>93</sup>L. D. Goodstein, "Behavior: Theoretical View of Counselling," in B. Steffire (ed.) *Theories of Counseling* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), pp. 140-192.

<sup>94</sup>Kemp, p. 154.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

help people to become aware of their guilt feelings, we are helping to raise their dignity. If we ignore or help in suppressing the real guilt of a person, we are violating the integrity of that person. In that case, we should feel guilty ourselves.

Gandhi had an intense respect for the integrity of each person and therefore he realized that those who violate the integrity of another must be helped to become aware of their guilt. For Gandhi, it would be a form of violence if one did not help his neighbor to become aware of his real guilt. However, in the case of Gandhi, it was not a mechanical process but a human process. As a matter of fact, no mechanical process has power to make another become aware of his real guilt. On the other hand, it may even harden his heart and make him more violent than before. Arne Naess writes:

Gandhi demands not only personal abstention from violence but a conduct that does not provoke violence on the part of the opponent or anybody else affected by our conduct. Thus we should not humiliate him by certain kinds of passive resistance, because this is likely to produce hatred which in turn may strengthen his disposition towards future use of violence.<sup>96</sup>

Gandhi did not want to harden the hearts of his opponents but only to soften them. He realized that this cannot take place unless he and the opponents meet with each other as human beings. As long as there is even a little spark of humanness, there is a possibility of making an impact on the opponent. Therefore Gandhi approached his so-called enemies as friends and often addressed them as friends. He tried to

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<sup>96</sup>Arne Naess, "A Systematization of Gandhian Ethics of Conflict Resolution," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 11:2 (June 1958), 143.

create an environment in which his opponents could see him as a human being so that guilt could be aroused in his opponents. The idea of "enemy" is mythical. We create it and try to maintain it at a great cost. When all our pretensions are taken away, we immediately see a person behind the so-called enemy. By not treating his opponents as enemies, Gandhi was inviting them to treat him as a man. He knew that only in this human confrontation men will become aware of their injustices and wrongs which they have done against others. Gandhi realized that no matter how degraded a person might have become there is always a person ready to be touched on the deeper levels. Angyal writes:

An act directed against somebody who is an enemy, and nothing but an enemy, would not arouse guilt. But real people rarely live up to the qualifications of the mythical enemy. Even in those whom we hate we can usually see something that represents a possibility for human contact, and we can consequently feel a measure of guilt toward them.<sup>97</sup>

Gandhi was not merely interested in making a person aware of his real guilt, but in its resolution also. According to Gandhi human beings, under the fear of punishment, do not resolve their guilt authentically. A real resolution which is always mutually growth-producing, takes place in the context of mutual forgiveness. Therefore, Gandhi considered the need of forgiveness of his opponents as he was willing to forgive them. The fact of mutual forgiveness arises because both the exploiter and the exploited, play their respective roles in the game of exploitation. Guilt cannot be resolved completely unless there is

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<sup>97</sup>Angyal, p. 115.

a reconciliation between the parties concerned. This is done by recognizing each other and accepting each other as human beings. The process of resolution of guilt does not lie with only one party, it is always a mutual affair. John G. McKenzie writes, "Forgiveness involves something happening in both the wronged and the wrong-doer, it is never one-way traffic."<sup>98</sup>

A pastoral counsellor must not take the responsibility of helping a counsellee to resolve his real guilt in isolation. If the counsellor believes that reconciliation is a mark of a redemptive community, he will encourage his counsellee to confront the other person and resolve his guilt in a spirit of mutual forgiveness.

Belgum writes:

Forgiveness, instead of being an end or goal in self, is rather the very prerequisite, or atmosphere without which the whole process of reconciliation could not take place. Forgiveness is the hope that the sinner can again enter into relationship with God and neighbor instead of continuing as the hopeless victim of retaliation or alienation.<sup>99</sup>

Gandhi has led us to conclude that life and its meaning and what it means to believe in Jesus Christ can be found only as we search for the means and ways for a non-violent confrontation between man and man.

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<sup>98</sup>J. G. McKenzie, *Guilt* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 157.

<sup>99</sup>D. Belgum, *Guilt* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 27.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF GANDHI'S SATYAGRAHA FOR PASTORAL COUNSELLING IN INDIA

In the following pages I will seek some practical applications of Gandhi's *satyagraha* for the practice of pastoral counselling in India. Most of these implications are to be sought in the context of the counselling relationship between a counsellor and a counsellee. Some of these implications will provide a guideline for the personal development of the counsellor.

#### Applications of the Principle of Truth to Pastoral Counselling

In Gandhi's *satyagraha* there is no place for secrecy and untruth. According to Gandhi secrecy is not only dehumanizing but also creates misunderstanding and suspicion. Therefore it must be avoided at all cost. Gandhi writes:

In the method we are adopting in India, fraud, lying, deceit and all the ugly brood of violence and untruth have absolutely no room. Everything is done openly and above board, for truth hates secrecy. The more open you are the more truthful you are likely to be.<sup>1</sup>

The author agrees with Gandhi that there is no place for secrecy and untruth in an authentic and genuine relationship. It is hard to comprehend that healing could ever take place in a relationship

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<sup>1</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance* (New York: Schocken, 1972), p. 358.

infected with suspicion and mistrust. The relationship between the pastoral counsellor and the counsellee cannot proceed in the direction of genuine personal change if there is secrecy on the part of either the counsellor or the counsellee. If we want to transform the counselling relationship into a therapeutic relationship, we cannot afford to maintain an environment of secrecy during the counselling session. Secrecy is a serious problem in the Indian society. Gandhi said, "One of the curses of India is often the sin of secrecy."<sup>2</sup> People do not reveal themselves to each other openly. This may be due to the caste system or the perpetual poverty. However, secrecy seems to serve the purpose of keeping the anxieties and frustration of the people at a low level. Rena Gazaway writes, "They (people) grow up in a culture that permits them to hide from themselves as well as from others not of their own kind. Hiding, by whatever method limit their social anxieties and frustrations."<sup>3</sup>

The problem of keeping secrets away from the counsellee is a serious one. Is it wise to reveal everything to the counsellee or only that which is beneficial to him? How much can a counsellor share about his personal experience with his counsellee? All these questions are related to the problem of secrecy. The author feels that there is no prescribed answer which could be given to any counsellor.

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<sup>2</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1966), XIX, 144.

<sup>3</sup>R. Gazaway, "Portrait of a Rural Village," in J. C. Finney (ed.) *Culture Change, Mental Health and Poverty* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1969), p. 42.

Each counsellor must decide for himself how much open he would be with his counsellee. However, there is a guiding principle which must be taken into account. When a counsellee experiences a genuine truth in his counsellor, his own truth is activated and the process of healing begins to take place. On the other hand if the counsellee experiences untruth in his counsellor, he is likely to feel manipulated by his counsellor. If the relationship becomes manipulative, counselling becomes a game between the counsellor and the counsellee.

In order to avoid unproductive relationships, the counsellor must take the initiative to clear the air of suspicion. This can be done by being honest to the counsellee about the process of counselling. If the counsellee is anxious about the philosophy and the values of the counsellor, the counsellor should not hesitate to express his views openly to the counsellee. If the counsellor intends to use any particular method to facilitate the process of counselling, it should be shared openly with the counsellee. He should not surprise and confuse his counsellee with his "bag of tricks." There should not be any secrets kept away from the counsellee which are directly related to him. The author feels that the counsellor must not hesitate in sharing with his counsellee, what goes on during the supervisory sessions with regard to the counsellee. In fact, there is no harm to be honest with one's counsellee in sharing even the suggestions made by the supervisor. If the counsellor can be so humble that he is willing to share his own faults and shortcomings with his counsellee, he can develop an environment in which both can grow in a spirit of

mutuality. If the counsellor keeps all the secrets to himself, he is influencing his own behavior adversely towards his counsellee. Arne Naess writes:

The intention to keep certain plans, moves, motives and objectives secret influence our behavior so that we cannot face our opponent openly; such an intention is also more easily revealed to the opponent than we are likely to believe.<sup>4</sup>

Another important area in which Gandhi's truth has significant implication for the pastoral counselling in India, is the confrontation between the counsellor and the counsellee. There cannot be any genuine counselling without confrontation. If one wishes to be truthful to his own truth and respectful to the truth of others, confrontation cannot be avoided. In fact without confrontation it is difficult to establish any genuine and therapeutic relationship. The word "confrontation" has often been used with a negative connotation. We often think that when one person confronts another, it is always with the intent of pointing out his faults. Moreover, the human nature is such that we do not wish to be exposed by another person. Colston writes, "The human propensity in the face of confrontation of any sort is to hide or cover up. One of the prevailing human fears is to be found out."<sup>5</sup> If the confrontation is with the intent of exposing the person to others, it will have a negative impact on the person. Instead of becoming aware of his condition, he is likely to become

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<sup>4</sup>Arne Naess, "A Systematization of Gandhian Ethics of Conflict Resolution," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 11:2 (June 1958), 145.

<sup>5</sup>L. G. Colston, *Judgment in Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 26.



defensive. However, if confrontation takes place in the spirit of love and concern, the person will experience the force of growth working in him. Clinebell considers confrontation essential for one's growth. He writes:

Growth occurs in a relationship in which there is mutual feeding of the basic heart-hungers--the hunger for love, affirmation, freedom, pleasure, adventure, meaning. Shallow, manipulative relating (which is all that many people do), blocks growth and damages self-esteem. If such I-it relationships dominate one's early life, the growth drive becomes encrusted in defensiveness and fear; resistance to growth becomes intense. Growth-stimulating relationships are warm, caring, and trustful at the same time that they are honest, confronting, and open. *Caring + confrontation = growth!* This is the growth formula.<sup>6</sup>

Confrontation must take place in the spirit of caring whether one is confronting the weak or the strong points in another.

As I have already mentioned that confrontation does not always mean to point out the negative aspects of one's personality. One can confront another person also by pointing out his positive aspects. If we take into account both the positive and the negative aspects of one's personality, confrontation becomes an honest expression of one's perception of the discrepancy between his own perception and that of the person's perception of himself or of any situation. Susan C. Anderson defines confrontation as "the therapist's pointing out a discrepancy between his own and the clients way of viewing a situation."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>H. J. Clinebell, Jr., *The People Dynamic* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>Susan C. Anderson, "Effect of Confrontation by High- and Low-Functioning Therapists," *Journal of Counseling*, XV (1968), 411, cited in Colston, p. 152.

For the purpose of counselling it is essential that we emphasize more the positive aspects of our counsellee rather than their negative aspects.

We have identified with the "medical model" so much that we often look for *disease* rather than for the healing forces. It is the contention of this author that Gandhi's *satyagraha* encourages people to look at the *resources* rather than limitations of another person.<sup>8</sup>

The nature of confrontation depends upon the psychological and spiritual health of the counsellor and the counsellee. What kind of discrepancies does one pick up in another person depends also upon his basic assumption about the human nature. A person who believes that man is completely depraved will not be able to perceive any resources in another person. Of course, Gandhi does not ignore the necessity of pointing out the faults in another person but shows the importance of pointing out the positive aspects. According to Gandhi if someone can be made aware of his potentialities and his capacity to actualize them, he will be more independent and confident in handling his own problems. Susan Anderson<sup>9</sup> in her study came to the conclusion that when the therapists confronted their counselees with their resources rather than their limitations, the counselee's capacity to explore various alternatives increased. She also discovered that the therapists who offered high levels of the "facilitative conditions"

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<sup>8</sup>G. Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1957), p. 135.

<sup>9</sup>Anderson, p. 411.

(empathy, positive regard, genuineness, concreteness, and self-disclosure) usually confronted the person with his resources rather than his limitations and those therapists who functioned at low levels tended to do just the opposite, i.e., to confront the person with his limitations.

In any confrontation, one must be aware of the fact that truth is different for each person. Therefore, each person must be considered in the context of his own personal development and the historical situation in which he lives. Erikson writes:

The truth in any given encounter is linked with the developmental stage of the individual and the historical situation of his group: together they help to determine the actuality, i.e., the potential for unifying action at a given moment.<sup>10</sup>

If the counsellor is aware of this fact, he will be more generous and careful in his confrontation with his counsellee. Pastoral counselling will become a religious activity when we treat another person with respect and try to understand his truth and help him to become aware of his truth.

#### Application of the Principle of Non-Violence to the Resolution of Conflict in Marriage and Family

In this section, the author will attempt to apply Gandhi's principle of non-violence to the resolution of conflict in marriage and family in India. According to Gandhi conflict is inevitable in any encounter between two human beings because each person sees truth

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<sup>10</sup>E. H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 413.

from his or her own perspective. Conflict can be resolved either by violent or non-violent methods. Gandhi suggested that the non-violent methods are much superior to the violent methods in resolving conflict.

How can a pastoral counsellor or a minister help in the resolution of marital conflicts? In the past, and even at the present, Christian ministers in India have used the traditional methods of compromise and patching-up of problems with the purpose of keeping the marriage intact and functional for the sake of the children, relatives and the society. They have used the religious resources of prayer and exhortation to reconcile the couple to each other and to establish peace in the family. In most of these instances, no genuine resolution of conflict takes place except a denial and repression of the issues. On the surface there is peace and quiet but deep down, there is anger and hostility which erupts from time to time in the form of overt attacks or passive aggressive acts.

In the rural areas where people live in a joint-family system, a conflict between the husband and wife becomes a conflict of the whole family. Most of these conflicts arise as a result of the hierarchy of roles and lack of direct communication between the members of the family. The members of the family do not address each other by their names but by designated roles. In many areas, the wife is not permitted to address her husband by his first name in the presence of others or even in the presence of her husband. In a situation like this the nature of conflict is more communal than personal.

In the urban areas there are more nuclear families. Many couples live separately, away from their parents. Therefore there are more opportunities for the husband and wife to communicate directly to each other and to establish more intimate relationships. There is a sense of independence from their parents and a sense of autonomy which is not completely free from the interferences of parents. Only a very few are able to develop a full-fledged autonomy and their own unique identity. In order to develop intimate relationships, people must have a sense of autonomy and identity. Charlotte and Howard Clinebell write:

Basic to any individual's ability to relate intimately with another person is a firm *sense of personal identity*--a dependable core feeling of who one is as a separate individual, of what one really values in contrast to oughts and shoulds of others--one's intrinsic value as a person not dependent on the whims of approval and disapproval of others.<sup>11</sup>

In the urban couples, the nature of their conflicts is more personal than communal. However, these conflicts are not completely free from some interferences from the parents. Whether these conflicts arise in the context of the nuclear family system or the joint-family system, these conflicts must be resolved creatively, otherwise they will create alienation between the members of the family. When there is alienation between the members of the family, there is a great possibility of violence. Charlotte and Howard Clinebell write on this issue:

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<sup>11</sup>H. J. Clinebell, and C. H. Clinebell, *The Intimate Marriage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 42.

Conflict often produces a distancing cycle in marriage. The need-deprivation causes anger and attack which results in counter-attack and the increase of interpersonal distance, which in turn produces greater need-deprivation and greater anger.<sup>12</sup>

The author will present a few ideas, based on Gandhi's concept of non-violence, which could be used by the Christian ministers of India in resolving the interpersonal conflicts in marriage or family.

*Communication.* The first step is to bring the people involved in the conflict in a face-to-face encounter. Oates writes, "The ministry of reconciliation intends to get people into face-to-face conversation with each other."<sup>13</sup> According to Gandhi, a person must communicate his grievances to his opponent explicitly and clearly but always keeping in mind that he is fighting against the antagonisms and not against the antagonist.<sup>14</sup> Most often this important distinction is ignored in the resolution of any conflict. It is at this point that a minister can intervene by helping the couple to keep this distinction clear. They must be helped to recognize that there is nothing wrong in attacking the issues. The emphasis should be on dialogue where both could communicate to each other directly. They should not be allowed to engage in arguments which are generally meant to bring a showdown of one person by another. The purpose of

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<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>13</sup>W. E. Oates, *Pastoral Counseling in Social Problems* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 53.

communication should be in the direction of victory for both rather than in the defeat for one. This can be effectively accomplished by focusing on the issues rather than the persons. Gandhi<sup>15</sup> did not allow any attack on the person. Charlotte and Howard Clinebell in their book, *The Intimate Marriage*, write:

Effective conflict-resolution communication focuses on *issues* rather than attacking personalities. This is the chief characteristic of productive, as distinguished from futile arguments. Furthermore, conflict resolution deals with *specific issues* on which decisions and compromise action can be worked out.<sup>16</sup>

According to Gandhi a person must make his case clear to his opponent not only through his words but also by his actions. If we apply this idea to marriage counseling, it can be changed from a mere verbal dialogue to communication in depth. However, one must be careful that this action-oriented counselling does not lead to despair and frustration. Bach and Wyden in their book, *The Intimate Enemy*, have recommended open fights and expression of emotions in the resolution of marital conflicts. They write:

We believe, then, that there can be no mature intimate relationship without aggressive levelling; that is, 'having it out,' speaking up, asking the partner 'what's eating' him and negotiating for realistic settlements of differences.<sup>17</sup>

Gandhi would recommend a person to become aware of his negative feelings but would not allow him to express them violently against any

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Clinebell and Clinebell, p. 98.

<sup>17</sup> G. R. Bach and P. Wyden, *The Intimate Enemy* (New York: Morrow, 1969), p. 13.

person. However, he would insist a person to confess<sup>18</sup> his negative feelings to his opponent. Any benefit gained by expressing the negative feelings is temporary and the need to express them again, persists. Straus writes:

There can be little doubt that an outburst of aggressive activity is often followed by a sharp reduction in tension, an emotional release, and even a feeling of quiescence. Thus, there is often an immediate cathartic effect. But to the extent that such tension release is produced by verbal and physical aggression, this immediate effect is likely to powerfully reinforce the aggression which preceded it. Having reduced tension in one instance it becomes a mode of behavior that is likely to be repeated later in similar instances.<sup>19</sup>

The pastoral counsellor should not encourage suppression of these negative feelings because they will reappear in more violent form. Instead, he should help the couple *to become more assertive* to each other without being aggressive. When one becomes aggressive, there is a tendency to destroy and hurt others, whereas in being assertive, one takes full responsibility for his own feelings and emotions. He does not intend to reduce his tension at the cost of others. He does not treat others as objects for draining off his anger and hostility. When people are used, depersonalization takes place and the possibilities of violence in various forms continue to emerge in human relationships. Therefore, aggressiveness in the sense of attacking and humiliating others must be discouraged. We

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<sup>18</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 75.

<sup>19</sup>M. A. Straus, "Levelling, Civility and Violence in the Family," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, XXXVI:1 (February 1974), 25.



must teach the couple to learn the art of being assertive. Straus expresses his view on this issue:

However aggressiveness is not the only alternative to passive acceptance of the status quo. One can be assertive without being aggressive. Unfortunately, the important difference between these two modes of interaction is usually blurred because . . . current terminology tends to equate them.<sup>20</sup>

If people could develop the quality of assertiveness, they would not allow themselves to be manipulated by others. There will be no need to accumulate anger and hostility to be exploded on others. Being assertive means to be aware of oneself and his human rights. The quality of assertiveness is almost necessary for a genuine resolution of a conflict. One cannot present his case explicitly and clearly to his opponent (spouse) if the person is not assertive about himself. The counsellor can help the couple to recognize the instances where they could assert themselves rather than leave the outcome of their conflicts to fate or external help. The most important aspect of assertiveness is the insistence to be recognized as a human being. According to Gandhi, there is no place for impulsive behavior for a person who wants to assert himself. In a situation where violence becomes necessary, it should not be impulsive but chosen and acted upon willingly. Leonard Berkowitz writes:

Impulsive behavior is not carried out with deliberation and forethought. It bursts forth, relatively free of control by intellect and cognitive processes. When this happens, man is more like the lower animals than he is otherwise and is subject to many of the same influences that operate on them.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Leonard Berkowitz, "The Contagion of Violence: An S-R

As human beings we have the capacity to express our emotions and feelings without hurting others. Therefore, to announce and voice one's opposition to injustice or unfavorable behavior of another is to assert oneself. There are many small incidents in marital relationships where both the husband and the wife have the opportunity to assert themselves by non-cooperating or resisting against each other. Each person must communicate where he or she stands. In simple matters, there are opportunities to assert oneself by saying "yes" or "no" willingly. A person must not act contrary to his own convictions. The pastoral counsellor must pay attention to all these simple responses and help the people to become aware as to how they respond to each other. Howard and Charlotte Clinebell write:

Healthy assertiveness sometimes helps to reduce unproductive conflict. Many people who are depressed or hostile most of the time are simply struggling to hold down their natural aggressiveness and to avoid becoming aware of negative feelings.<sup>22</sup>

*Trusting One's Partner.* According to Gandhi many interpersonal conflicts arise because of fear and mistrust of each other. Each person is afraid to be hurt by another. When people are suspicious of each other, conflicts develop even on minor issues. As a result their perception is blurred and therefore misunderstanding occurs between them. Ralph W. Gerard, a psychiatrist states:

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Mediational Analysis of Some Effects of Observed Aggression," *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), pp. 132-133.

<sup>22</sup>Clinebell and Clinebell, pp. 97-98.

My assumption is that men are overwhelmingly of good will, that altruism at least balances selfishness, and that most fracas result less from legitimate conflict or interest than from exaggerated mistrust and fear and the resultant counter measures.<sup>23</sup>

Naess who has systematized Gandhian ethics of conflict resolution also states that, "the tendency to misjudge our opponent and his case in an unfavorable direction increases his and our tendency to resort to violence."<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is the task of the pastoral counsellor to encourage the couple to deal directly with their mutual fears and mistrust. The counsellor must help the couple to discover the positive sides of each other before expressing the negative feelings. According to Gandhi it is better to create an environment of good will before expressing any demand. If we express our fears and mistrust in an environment of good will, the possibilities of change are much higher than otherwise. Sharing of shortcomings in the spirit of mutual care is bound to result in a genuine resolution in which both feel victors.

*Home Work for the Couple.* According to Gandhi the *satyagrahi* and the opponent must find a common ground for cooperation in order to reduce alienation. Naess writes, "Try to formulate the essential interests which you and your opponent have in common and try to establish a cooperation with your opponent on this basis."<sup>25</sup> A

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<sup>23</sup> Ralph W. Gerard, "To Prevent Another World War: Truth Detection," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, V:2 (June 1961), 217.

<sup>24</sup> Naess, p. 146.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

pastoral counsellor can suggest the couple to engage in activities in which both have some common interest. This will give them a chance to learn to work together in areas free of conflict. The pastoral counsellor should help the couple to discover their own resources to resolve their problems in non-violent ways. By discovering the areas free from conflict, the couple with the help of these resources can build bridges to cross over into the areas of conflict with confidence and mutual respect for each other. Instead of playing the power games, the couple begins to learn the power of mutual assistance in resolving the problem.

*Role Play During the Sessions.* Gandhi considered that most of our problems arise because we do not try to understand the point of view of another person sympathetically. He wrote, "Three-fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in this world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint."<sup>26</sup> In marriage or in other intimate relationships, there should be empathic understanding. This helps not only in the resolution of conflicts but also in developing intimate relationships. Charlotte and Howard Clinebell write, "Putting oneself in the other's skin, even to a limited extent, obviously increases the intimacy in the relationship."<sup>27</sup> The pastoral counsellor can help the couple to learn the art of role-taking of the other's position. The husband

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<sup>26</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, pp. 193-194.

<sup>27</sup>Clinebell and Clinebell, p. 79.

and wife can learn to reverse various responses to anger and hostility. They can observe the differences between violent and non-violent responses. The non-violent response is a response of love and caring for the other. It does not have any connotation of retaliation or a desire to hurt the other at a suitable time. If the wife is attacked verbally or physically by her husband, she does not receive the attacks passively but resists all attacks without retaliation. In her resistance, she affirms her husband as a person whom she loves and wishes that he would change. At the same time she communicates to him that she is willing to make a change. Instead of doing anything which will anger her husband, she will do what will make him happy, but not at the cost of surrendering her freedom and convictions. In the same way the husband can learn to behave with his wife so that he will communicate his basic love to her. There are various non-violent responses with which a couple can experiment.

A non-violent response is characterized by love and caring for the other person. It communicates a desire to treat and be treated like a human being. There is willingness to overcome alienation and be reconciled and to grow together according to one's own unique potentialities. There is no desire to humiliate or destroy the other person.

If the husband and wife could learn to experiment with non-violent responses, they can become models for identification for their own children. Alan J. Rosenthal and Frederic W. Ilfeld of Stanford Department of Psychiatry recommend that adults could give children

opportunity to be self-confident and assertive without being violent. "Parents and other models for identification could, by example, aid the child to develop and use conceptual thinking in coping with conflict rather than using impulsive immediate action."<sup>28</sup>

Thus in conclusion, a pastoral counsellor has the task of teaching the people to learn to respond to each other in non-violent ways rather than in violent and impulsive manner. If we can introduce this element in pastoral counselling in India, we would certainly help to reduce violence and aggression in the interpersonal relationships.

#### Application of the Principle of Mutual Growth to Counselling Relationship

Gandhi used *satyagraha* as an encounter in which both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent could relate to each other in the spirit of mutuality. Even though Gandhi was not successful in establishing the spirit of mutuality in every case, it was his desire to involve his opponents in a relationship, where both the *satyagrahi* and the opponent could grow mutually. Erikson writes, "I would call mutuality a relationship in which partners depend on each other for the development of their respective strengths."<sup>29</sup> This principle of mutuality is applicable not only to situations of conflict but to every

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<sup>28</sup>A. J. Rosenthal and F. W. Ilfeld, Jr., "Summary of Recommendations," in D. N. Daniels, M. F. Gilul, and F. M. Ochberg (eds.) *Violence and Struggle for Existence*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), p. 392.

<sup>29</sup>E. H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility* (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 231.

encounter between two or more human beings. In other words, every encounter is potentially pregnant with the possibility of mutual growth.

In the past the Christian ministers in India have engaged in the practice of "pastoral counselling" with the aim of helping others rather than of growing together. This attitude is present not only with the Christian ministers of India but is a general attitude of the so-called "professional" counsellors. It has been a general practice among the "professional" counsellors, not to reveal their own problems to their counselees but to expect of their counselees to reveal their problems to them. One of the reasons for this hesitation may be due to the business type of contract which is made between the counsellor and the counsellee. Under such an agreement, the counsellor is *expected* to help his counsellee. This attitude on the part of many counsellors may also originate because of the "medical model" which has emphasized on the pathological side rather than on the positive side. Both the counsellor and the counsellee function within a "sickness-orientation" rather than a "growth-orientation." The counselling sessions are dominated by the negative side of the personality and therefore it is difficult for the counsellor to reveal his own problems to the counsellee. Clinebell writes:

In contrast to the pathology orientation, the growth approach elicits different responses from the people, draws on different sides of their personalities (the healthy sides), and suggests that help lies in a different direction--setting goals and working toward them rather than striving mainly to repair damaged areas of relationships and personalities.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Clinebell, *The People Dynamic*, p. 4.

In the context of the "sickness-orientation," the focus is always on the counsellee. Both the counsellor and the counsellee meet each other on this implicit assumption. Therefore, "growth" takes place only in one direction. The counsellor misses great opportunities to grow himself and to make his counselling more meaningful. When the counsellor and the counsellee meet each other in their respective roles and not as human beings, they do not contribute to each other's growth in becoming healthy and authentic human beings. In fact, by doing this they block the process of humanization. How can we help anyone if we do not meet each other as human beings? To consider the counsellee as someone who needs only help, and has no capacity to make a contribution towards the growth of the counsellor, is a very degrading attitude not only towards the counsellee but also towards the counselling relationship itself.

If we assume that one of the purposes of counselling is to help the counsellee to improve his relationships by becoming authentic, we must introduce this element in our counselling relationships. The counsellor must be authentic and willing to grow as a result of his encounter with his counsellee. This means that both the counsellor and the counsellee must join with each other with the purpose of mutual growth. If we can accomplish this, we can humanize the counselling relationships. Sidney Jourard writes, "I have gradually come to see therapy not as a setting in which one person, the therapist, does things to a patient . . . but rather as a relationship



. . . in which growth of both parties is an outcome."<sup>31</sup> A genuine therapeutic relationship between the counsellor and the counsellee cannot exist unless there is an environment of mutual growth. This environment can be created only if the counsellor is willing to consider himself as a person and to treat his counsellee with the same respect. In other words, the counsellee is respected for what he is, and not for what he should be. If the counsellee is a child then he is respected for being a child and if the counsellee is an old man, he is respected for being an old man. The counsellor recognizes that each person is able to make a contribution to another according to one's own potentialities and capacities. Erikson recognizes the importance of mutuality in the following words:

*. . . that truly worthwhile acts enhance a mutuality between the doer and the other--a mutuality which strengthens the doer even as it strengthens the other. Thus the 'doer' and 'the other' are partners in one deed. Seen in the light of human development, this means that the doer is activated in whatever strength is appropriate to his age, stage and condition, even as he activates in the other the strength appropriate to his age, stage and condition. Understood this way the Rule would say that it is best to do to another what will strengthen you even as it will strengthen him--that is, what will develop his best potentials even as it develops your own.*<sup>32</sup>

This insight, that is, the idea of mutual growth, is essential to any approach to pastoral counselling. There is a tendency on the part of many ministers, especially in an authoritarian culture, such as in India, to present themselves to their parishioners as perfect

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<sup>31</sup>S. S. Jourard, *The Transparent Self* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1964), p. 67.

<sup>32</sup>Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, p. 233.

or at least better than others. This is reciprocated by the parishioners also. This unhealthy relationship must be broken if we want people to grow. Therefore, it is essential for a pastoral counsellor to enter into a counselling relationship as a human being rather than as an "expert." As a matter of fact, an "expert" in pastoral counselling must be able to present himself as a person rather than in a role. The deeper trust originates not in the exchange of roles but in the meeting of genuine human beings. Of course, one cannot get rid of one's role but one can use it in such a manner that it does not interfere in the process of genuine mutual interaction. Both the counsellor and the counsellee must transcend their respective roles and meet each other as human beings. Gandhi mentions about Raychandbhai who was a connoisseur of pearls and diamonds and yet he was a human being. He did not hide himself behind his professional role of "connoisseur." Gandhi writes:

. . . I must say that no one else has ever made on me the impression that Raychandbhai did. His words went straight home to me. His intellect compelled as great a regard from me as his moral earnestness, *and deep down in me was the conviction that he would never willingly lead me astray and would always confide to me his innermost thoughts.* In my moments of spiritual crisis, therefore, he was my refuge.<sup>33</sup>

If we expect our counsellees to be open and honest to us, we must reciprocate this honesty by our own. As a matter of fact, the counsellees begin to open themselves to their counsellors only as the counsellors themselves open up to their counsellees. Carl Rogers has

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<sup>33</sup>Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 89. (Italics mine.)

recognized that personal growth is facilitated *when the therapist is what he is*. He calls this condition "congruence." He writes:

I think that we readily sense this quality in our everyday life. We could each of us name persons whom we know who always seems to be operating from behind a front, who are playing a role who tend to say things they do not feel. They are exhibiting incongruence. We do not reveal ourselves too deeply to such people. On the other hand each of us knows individuals whom we somewhat trust, because we sense that they *are*, that we are dealing with the person himself, and not with a polite or professional facade.<sup>34</sup>

A counsellor does not use his "genuineness" as a technique to help others but offers himself as a human being to another in genuineness. It is in this offer that genuineness activates the forces of growth in the other person. Whatever skills he might possess, are used within the context of this genuine human encounter. Clinebell has put it very well in the context of leadership of small groups. He writes:

A leader helps the group move from superficial socializing to need-satisfying relating by sharing his own feelings and responding to the feelings of others. He listens, not as an expert to a needy client but as one hurting, hoping human being to another.<sup>35</sup>

If the counsellor and the counsellee experience mutual growth during the counselling sessions, they both would become better change agents in their other relationships also. The counsellor becomes not only a better counsellor but also a better husband or a better father. In the same way the counsellee becomes a better person and authentic

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<sup>34</sup>Carl R. Rogers, "The Therapeutic Relationship: Recent Theory and Research," in G. Babiadellis and S. Adams (eds.) *The Shaping of Personality* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 468.

<sup>35</sup>Clinebell, *The People Dynamic*, p. 37.

in his relationships with other persons. In other words, the benefits gained during the counselling sessions are carried to all relationships and situations. If one has begun growing, he cannot but help others to grow. In every encounter, he is able to activate the forces of growth in others and stands ready to be activated himself. There is no encounter which does not present this possibility to a man who has started growing. Erikson writes:

For a real cure transcends the transitory state of patienthood. It is an experience which enables the cured patients to develop and to transmit to home and neighborhood an attitude towards health which is one of the most essential ingredients of an ethical outlook.<sup>36</sup>

In conclusion I can state that Gandhi's idea of mutual growth is not only essential to any approach to pastoral counselling in India but is important for the humanization of counselling relationship in general. The idea of mutual growth has the possibilities of breaking down the walls of alienation and of building the bridges of reconciliation by recognizing the truth that all human beings have the capacity to make contributions to each other's personal growth. If this insight is integrated into pastoral care and counselling, it will certainly break down the walls of alienation which exist between the minister and his parishioners. A genuine counselling can take place only when there is no alienation between the counsellor and the counsellee.

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<sup>36</sup>Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, pp. 236-237.

Application of the Principle of Self-Purification to the Personal  
Growth of the Pastoral Counsellor

According to Gandhi no person can become an effective *satyagrahi* without going through a complete self-purification of his motives, prejudices and emotional problems. By self-purification, Gandhi means to get rid of any falsehood which interferes in the realization of one's genuine truth. It means to become authentic to oneself as well as to others by discovering both the positive and the negative aspects of one's personality. Self-purification is not merely an awareness of one's weakness and strength but also an attempt to make proper changes in one's attitude and behavior. What Gandhi is suggesting is that the *satyagrahi* must know who he is. In other words, he must have a firm sense of identity. The process of self-purification is not once-for-all but a continuous process throughout the life. It means that a person is ready to examine himself whenever confronted by the truth of another and willing to grasp the opportunity of making any change within himself. Erikson writes:

What is true now will, if not attended to, never be true again; and what is untrue now will never, by any trick, become true later. Therefore I would interpret, and interpret with humility, the truth-force of the religious actualist thus: to be ready to grasp the only chance to have lived fully.<sup>37</sup>

Thus the *satyagrahi* is always in the process of becoming and overcoming the forces of alienation within his own self. He is ready to listen to the true wisdom of his inner voice in order to exist as an authentic

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<sup>37</sup>Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth*, p. 399.

human being.

The pastoral counsellor cannot afford to live in estrangement within his own self. He must resolve his conflicts before he can practice counselling effectively. As a pastoral counsellor, he must become aware of his prejudices. If there is a conflict between what he understands intellectually and what he does in practice, there will be difficulties in his relationships with the counselees. Kemp writes:

The greater the congruence between the theory he has assimilated and what he really believes about man the greater is the efficiency to be expected in the counselling process. The therapist's view of human nature does have consequences in his therapy.<sup>38</sup>

Since most of the prejudices are inculcated by the culture, a pastoral counsellor cannot claim to be an exception. He must not only examine his prejudices but also purify them, otherwise he cannot present himself fully to his counselees in the counselling sessions as well as outside. His ability to listen empathically will be greatly reduced. It is difficult to become aware of one's own prejudices without the help of others. Therefore, ministers must be encouraged to join small growth groups where they can become aware of their prejudices as well as do something about them. Clinebell writes, "An important aspect of growth which groups can facilitate is an awareness of one's hidden prejudices."<sup>39</sup> In India, many people suffer from

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<sup>38</sup>C. G. Kemp, *Intangibles in Counseling* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), p. 13.

<sup>39</sup>Clinebell, *The People Dynamic*, p. 150.

prejudices against other people of a different religion, caste, sex and age. If the Indian pastoral counsellor has not become aware of and purified some of these prejudices, he cannot accept fully his counsellees. He cannot be at ease with his counsellee nor can he help him to be at ease with him.

Apart from prejudices, the counsellor may suffer from various emotional problems as a result of his own growing up. If he wants to help other people, he would need to deal with his own problems first before he can help any other person. Gandhi was very emphatic on this issue. He said:

Therefore a person who claims to be a satyagrahi always tries by close and prayerful self-introspection and self-analysis to find out whether he is himself completely free from the taint of anger, ill-will and such human infirmities. . . . In self-purification and penance lies half the victory of a satyagrahi.<sup>40</sup>

Gandhi sees self-purification not only as a means of self-development but also as an instrument for change in others. In other words, change can be initiated in others by changing oneself. If the counsellee recognizes that the counsellor is not a rigid person but flexible, who is open to change, there is a great likelihood that he may also change. Self-purification, for Gandhi was a means of improving his skills as a *satyagrahi*. When Gandhi had to terminate his *satyagraha* in 1919, due to incidents of violence, he said,

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<sup>40</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 77.

I must undergo personal cleaning. . . . I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skill-less to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill.<sup>41</sup>

He was so much convinced of the value of self-purification that he considered it conditional for any help from God. He wrote, "Ever since 1921 I have been reiterating two words, self-purification and self-sacrifice. God will not help him without these two."<sup>42</sup> The concept of self-purification as an aid to learning skills, makes skills personal rather than mechanical.

One of the most serious issues to which a pastoral counsellor must pay attention is the issue of authority. How does he view himself as a minister in relation to his parishioners? If he imagines himself as somewhat superior to others, because of his skills and knowledge, he will naturally create resistance in the people. In India, people are brought up in an authority-centered leadership, exercised at various levels. Therefore, a minister is likely to use his authority for his own self-elevation. This should not happen in a counselling relationship. Bernard Steinzor writes:

When we accept our superior skill and knowledge as the basic reason which brings the patient to us and which will make the difference, we generate resistance. When we accept the relation between the helper and the applicant as a superior-inferior one, we convert the fact that there is always some

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<sup>41</sup>M. K. Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 4th ed. (Madras: G. H. Natesan, 1933), pp. 659-660.

<sup>42</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 252.



experience of humiliation in such a situation into a norm as to what the relation should be. A person resents being dependent and being reminded he is so.<sup>43</sup>

In fact, the minister is exposed to not only one-to-one relationship but also to small and large group relationships. In all these situations the minister must examine his role. He should become aware of his style of leadership in all these relationships. He should not create a sense of dependence but help the people to make use of their own resources. His task is to activate the growth potentials which are already present in the people. Clinebell writes, "By avoiding the authority-centered role, the leader puts the responsibility where it belongs--on the group--thus helping them activate and use their own resources."<sup>44</sup>

According to Gandhi, the process of self-purification takes place on two levels: the personal level which includes prayer, fasting, keeping silence and abstinence from sex; the communal level includes confession of one's failures and shortcomings in a small group. Both these levels of self-purification were essential for the personal and professional (skills of *satyagraha*) development of the *satyagrahi*. Gandhi stated, "I repeat that ours is a sacred pilgrimage, and self-examination and self-purification are essentials without which we cannot do."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>B. Steinzor, *The Healing Partnership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 98.

<sup>44</sup>Clinebell, *The People Dynamic*, p. 38.

<sup>45</sup>Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, p. 237.

The author feels that the training of the pastoral counsellors (ministers), should not be limited to only theoretical level but should include opportunities for personal growth and skill development. This can be accomplished to some extent by introducing small growth groups for the theological students at the seminaries. In small groups, patterned after the non-violent way of relation, students can grow in their personal life as well as in their counselling skills. Recognizing the importance of personal prayer and meditation, we cannot ignore the power of small groups which can help the students to learn the art of self-purification with the help of each other.

In conclusion, we can state that the process of self-purification is a necessary part of the training of the pastoral counsellor. Unless the pastoral counsellor has prepared himself spiritually, his theoretical knowledge of the theories of pastoral counselling will not be of much use.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In this dissertation, I have explored Gandhi's *satyagraha* as a method of personal change and sought its theoretical implications and practical applications for the practice of pastoral counselling in India. I have made a small start in this new direction and touched upon only a few topics in this vast area. I feel that Gandhi has much more to offer to the church in India than what I have been able to demonstrate through this study. As a result of my study, I think that further research is needed in several directions. The following

areas may be of great significance for the growth of pastoral care and counselling in India:

1. There is an urgent need to develop and improve the quality of the existing groups in the church and the community. Research may be carried out in the direction of exploring the factors responsible for the production of conflict and the ways of handling these conflicts in groups on the basis of Gandhi's principles of truth, non-violence and self-suffering.

2. Research may be conducted in the use of non-violent responses in the process of negotiations between individuals or opposing parties. This may lead to a study of attitudes conducive to negotiations. One can explore if the cooperative attitudes are more conducive to negotiations than competitive attitudes between groups.

3. Research is needed in the development of some experimental games which could be used to teach the couples and groups, in conflict, the art of responding to each other in a non-violent manner.

4. Research is needed in the area of communication. In a country like India where negotiations between groups are rendered more difficult by linguistic, cultural and religious differences, a study is in order, as to how communication can be improved between different groups on the basis of Gandhi's *satyagraha*.

5. Research is also called forth for the development of pastoral care and counselling for the social structures in the Indian society. How can the minister utilize some of the principles of Gandhi in seeking social change in the community?

6. I think research is needed to develop the discipline of marriage and family counselling, based upon the psychosocial make-up of the people and the utilization of Gandhi's principles of truth, non-violence and self-suffering.

7. Research may be conducted in the area of developing channels for the constructive use of aggression. How can the periodic eruption of riots be prevented? Gandhi's idea of "constructive programme" may offer some ways to channel aggression for creative purposes.

8. Another important area in which further research may be conducted is the role of pastoral counselling in the liberation of women in the Indian society, based on Gandhi's concept of equality of men and women.

9. A most useful area for the development of the discipline of pastoral counselling in India, is the study of the Indian psychological and sociological findings and their applications to pastoral care and counselling.

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